



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

UC-NRLF



B 3 957 873

Apolitical Politics:

A Critique of Behavioralism

Apolitical Politics

SUBC

A Critique of Behavioralism

edited by

Charles A. McCoy, LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

John Playford, MONASH UNIVERSITY

Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York

Established 1834

212 - 489-2200 (2)
SOCIAL
SCIENCE

Copyright © 1967 by
Thomas Y. Crowell Company
All Rights Reserved

Except for use in a review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, and in any information storage and retrieval system is forbidden without the written permission of the publisher.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 67-26837

Manufactured in the United States of America

First Printing, November, 1967
Second Printing, September, 1968

JA 84
U5 M37

~~SECRET~~
MAIN

Preface

For the last few years I have taught a graduate seminar at Temple University under the august title of Political Science Symposium. The seminar is one of two required courses for all graduate students and its purpose is to introduce new graduate students to the various behavioralist methods of studying political science.

The students are concerned with the writings of Robert A. Dahl, David Easton, Harold D. Lasswell, Richard C. Snyder, Seymour Martin Lipset, Gabriel A. Almond, Anthony Downs, William H. Riker, David B. Truman, to mention only those most frequently discussed. At the same time it has also seemed desirable for them to become familiar with some of the writings critical of behavioralism, such as those of Leo Strauss, John H. Hallowell, Bernard Crick, and W. G. Runciman. Nevertheless, I have been troubled that the critical balance did not seem adequate: while the behavioralists' critics are articulate about methodological and philosophical difficulties, many of them have failed to come to grips with the concrete writings of the behavioralists themselves; nor do they comment specifically enough on the values that are more implicit than explicit in the behavioralist school of thought.

In February of last year I went to Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, as a Fulbright Professor of American Politics. While there I was invited by Professor S. R. Davis, who holds the Chair in Politics at Monash, to join him in giving a seminar entitled, again rather grandly, the "Frontiers of Political Science: The American Science of Politics." In addition to Professor Davis and the honors students who attended, various other members of the Politics faculty at Monash were regular participants in the seminar.

I continued to be disturbed by the inadequacies of the critical literature available and—perhaps because of the different surroundings and distance from the American scene—I became more conscious

of the need for better material. At this time I had the fortune to engage in a number of discussions with Dr. John Playford, lecturer in Politics at Monash, and discovered that he shared my feelings. We therefore jointly undertook the task of assembling this volume of readings, which we believe fills a serious gap in the literature available to students wishing to learn something about current trends in political science in America.

Both Dr. Playford and myself wish to express our appreciation of Professor Davis's encouragement and critical comment, and of the secretarial assistance he provided for us. We are also grateful to all participants in the seminar for their comments on the readings presented to them. Needless to add, only Dr. Playford and myself are responsible for the final selections presented in this volume.

C. A. McC.

Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
--------------	---

THE NEW REALISM OF THE BEHAVIORALISTS

<i>William Bayart</i>	Politics and Pseudopolitics: A Critical Evaluation of Some Behavioral Literature	12
<i>John Kim</i>	The Limits of Behavioural Explanation in Politics	38
<i>John E. Schwartz</i>	Strategic Thought: Methodology and Reality	55

THE NEW CONSERVATISM OF THE BEHAVIORALISTS

<i>James Petras</i>	Ideology and United States Political Scientists	76
<i>Yasuo Ono</i>	The Limits of Bourgeois Pluralism	99
<i>Michael Gitlin</i>	Local Pluralism as Theory and Ideology	124
<i>Barbara Bachrach and Ronald S. Baratz</i>	Two Faces of Power	146

THE NEW DEMOCRACY OF THE BEHAVIORALISTS

<i>James Duncan and John Lukes</i>	The New Democracy	160
<i>Davis</i>	The Cost of Realism: Contemporary Restatements of Democracy	185

viii Contents

Jack L. Walker	A Critique of the Elitist Theory of Democracy	199
Maure L. Goldschmidt	Democratic Theory and Contemporary Political Science	220

IV THE NEW POLITICAL THEORY OF THE BEHAVIORALISTS

H. R. G. Greaves	Political Theory Today	232
-------------------------	-------------------------------	------------

With increasing frequency and self-assurance, the scientific objectivity of American social science is proclaimed by some of its prominent practitioners. Various explanations are offered for the onset of social science's Golden Age, but central to most of them is the claim that modern social science has managed to resolve Mannheim's Paradox, namely, that in the pursuit of the truth the social scientist himself is handicapped by the narrow focus and distortions implicit in ideological thought. Presumably, the social scientist can now probe any aspect of human organization and behavior as dispassionately as physical scientists observe the structure of the atom or chemical reactions. For this reason, it is claimed by some that the ideologically liberated social scientists—at least in the United States—can expect to be co-opted into the Scientific Culture, or that segment of society that is presumably aloof from and disdainful toward the moralistic speculations and the tender-heartedness of the literary intellectuals.

The behavioral "revolution" in political science may have run its course, but it has left in its wake both obscurantist criticisms of empiricism, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, an unquestioning belief in "science." Quite often the latter belief is not merely anti-historical and anti-philosophical but also uncritical about the extent to which empirical observations can be colored by the very orientation of values that one seeks to control in rigorous empirical research.

Joseph LaPalombara, "Decline of Ideology: A Dissent and an Interpretation," *American Political Science Review*, LX (1966), 5.

Introduction

OVER THE PAST DECADE the behaviorist school of political science has been in the ascendancy in the United States.¹ David Easton, author of the pioneering work, *The Political System* (1953), recently wrote that the full meaning and significance of behavioral research was more than scientific techniques, more than rigor:

The behavioral approach testifies to the coming of age of theory in the social sciences as a whole, wedded, however, to a commitment to the assumptions and methods of empirical science. Unlike the great traditional theories of past political thought, new theory tends to be analytic, not substantive, explanatory rather than ethical, more general and less particular. That portion of political research which shares these commitments to both the new theory and the technical means of analysis and verification thereby links political science to broader behavioral tendencies in the social sciences; hence its description as political behavior.²

He also states that a "revolution" in political theory has been taking place and is now taken for granted. The "central role" in the transformation of political science as a discipline was performed by behavioral

¹ An enormous quantity of literature now exists in which the behaviorist approach is utilized. The following works would be a sufficient sample for an understanding of behavioralism: James C. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Limits of Behavioralism in Political Science* (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1962); Heinz Eulau, Samuel J. Eldersveld, Morris Janowitz (eds.), *Political Behavior: A Reader in Theory and Research* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956); Austin Ranney (ed.), *Essays on the Behavioral Study of Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962); S. Sidney Ulmer (ed.), *Introductory Readings in Political Behavior* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1961); Roland Young (ed.), *Approaches to the Study of Politics* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1958).

² David Easton, *A Framework for Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 22.

2 Introduction

theory or, as it is sometimes termed, empirically oriented general theory. Easton feels that those who use the behavioralist approach constitute "a concrete academic movement,"³ whose adherents have "tended to publish through a limited number of periodicals, and, unexpectedly, the movement has even evoked a limited degree of specialization in the choice of book publishers."⁴

One index of the spectacular rise in the influence of the behavioralist school is to be found in a recent survey carried out among members of the American Political Science Association. Asked to rank the great men in political science since 1945, the respondents named the following behavioralists in the top ten: the late V. O. Key, Jr. (first), David B. Truman (second), Robert A. Dahl (fourth), Harold D. Lasswell (fifth), Herbert A. Simon (sixth), Gabriel A. Almond and David Easton (equal seventh). Only one of the first eight, Hans J. Morgenthau (third), does not use a behavioral approach.⁵ There was, however, considerable disagreement between pro- and anti-behavioralists as to the order of ranking within the Great Ten. Dahl, for example, was ranked fourth by the pro-behavioralists and tenth by the anti-behavioralists.⁶ The split has carried over into the ranking of universities as well. Yale is ranked first by the pro-behavioralists and only sixth by the anti-behavioralists, in contrast to Harvard, which is ranked second by the anti-behavioralists and sixth by the pro-behavioralists.⁷ It should also be noted that the last three presidents of the American Political Science Association are prominent members of the behavioralist school: Truman (1964–65), Almond (1965–66), and Dahl (1966–67). It would not be unwarranted to speak of the behavioralists as members of an "establishment" within the discipline. In fact, David E. Apter confirms that American social scientists have been co-opted into the broader American "establishment."⁸ Joseph LaPalombara's comments on the social scientist's role within this "establishment" are particularly pertinent:

. . . if there is an American "establishment" and if the social scientist has come to play such a prominent role in it, one would expect that in the rationalization and defense of his well-ordered world the social

³ *Ibid.*, p. 20. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵ Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus, *American Political Science: A Profile of a Discipline* (New York: Atherton Press, 1964), p. 66.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71. ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁸ David E. Apter (ed.), *Ideology and Discontent* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), pp. 37–38.

scientist's words are likely to take on typically ideological overtones. In any event, it is difficult to imagine how the social scientist in the United States would now go about rebutting the reiterated Russian claim that Western social science is not much more than thinly veiled bourgeois ideology.⁹

We are not attempting to deny the undeniable. In the past, American political scientists have been unduly preoccupied with the philosophic, legalistic, or descriptive treatment of political institutions. The behavioralists, in their application of rigorous scientific method, in their insistence on the importance of theory-building, and in their increased utilization of the findings of sociology and psychology, have contributed significantly towards expanding the boundaries and broadening the perspective of political science.¹⁰ But while the behavioral approach has illuminated many areas, not a few scholars have been astonished by statements from the bolder behavioralists such as Heinz Eulau to the effect that *all* aspects of political science can be treated behaviorally.

In spite of the growing hegemony of this school, much difficulty remains in defining behavioralism and identifying the behavioralists. Of course, this is not a unique problem in discussing schools of thought or trends within them. Who is bold enough or foolish enough to believe he can give exactitude to "existentialism" or to "Marxism"? While any such attempt will inevitably be met by demurs and denials, meaningful books and critiques have been written on both Marxism and existentialism. We therefore ask the reader to indulge our assumption of his awareness of and familiarity with the tendency in the discipline that is being analyzed. That there may not be a behavioralist qua behavioralist does not mean that there is not an essence of behavioralism to be evaluated.

The articles collected together in this volume all share a unifying focus, from which three main points emerge: these authors find the professional writings of the behavioralists characterized by conservatism, a fear of popular democracy, and an avoidance of vital political issues. *First*, the work of the behavioralists, whether they be group theorists such as Truman or "equiliberals" such as Dahl and Polsby, is pervaded by implicit and unrecognized conservative values. They do not distrust change, but feel that it must come gradually through established

⁹ Joseph LaPalombara, "Decline of Ideology: A Dissent and an Interpretation," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LX (1966), pp. 14-15.

¹⁰ See Seymour Martin Lipset, "Sociology and Political Science: A Bibliographical Note," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 29 (1964), pp. 730-734.

4 Introduction

institutions and in a manner acceptable to the political elite. Ten years ago, Dwight Waldo observed in a survey of American political scientists that "the political order has been 'accepted,' and distinctive American 'political theory' has tended to be concerned with means and methodology." He went on to report that the range of opinion expressed by those in the discipline

has on the whole and in the larger perspective of all political thought been remarkably small. The very fact that there could be widespread agreement on the possibility and desirability of reducing the study of politics to the single level of a "science" signifies a large amount of basic agreement as to political ends.¹¹

The views of the political behavioralists are consistent with those of sociologists Lipset and Bell, who obviously feel that "the traditional role of the intellectual as social critic is no longer logically possible. For if 'what ought to be' already is, then the intellectual has no other function than to describe and to celebrate the arrival of a Utopia." But the critique of this optimistic view by Rousseas and Farganis seems to us to have particular merit:

Yet much of the intellectual output of today in film, on the stage, and in art reveals a profound discontent with things as they are. Lipset and Bell recognize this intellectual alienation but conclude that it is not political. It is only by narrowly defining politics as concerned with "voting behaviour" or with "welfare measures," that they can come to such a conclusion. But if the traditional idea of political philosophy is maintained, there is yet some small contribution that intellectuals can make, which will be something other than a justification, tacit or overt, for whatever is.¹²

Almost every article included in this volume deals with all three characteristics. Nevertheless, certain articles are clearly more concerned

¹¹ Dwight Waldo, *Political Science in the United States of America: A Trend Report* (Paris: UNESCO, 1956), p. 17.

¹² Stephen W. Rousseas and James Farganis, "American Politics and the End of Ideology," *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 14 (1963), p. 350. Barrington Moore, Jr. shares this apprehension that if political science abandons its role as social critic it may forfeit its most significant function: "But if social science drops the mask of rational criticism from its program altogether, leaving it entirely to theology, journalism, and the Bohemian fringe of intellectual life, it can some day drown in a sea of verbiage, strewn with floating bits of meaningless data." Barrington Moore, Jr., *Political Power and Social Theory: Six Studies* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 110.

with one aspect than another. As might be expected, the three articles taken from *Science and Society* and *Studies on the Left* are more directly concerned with the conservative bias of behavioral studies. Specifically, they stress the conservative implications of an equilibrium or pluralistic model; in broader terms, they raise the question of whether an empirical science, which can only study what is and not what will be, much less what ought to be, must not be inherently conservative.

There is always the possibility that the particular model used, be it an equilibrium or pluralistic one, may condition the researcher's empirical findings. Because of the strength of the author's commitment to the model as an end in itself, he uses a kind of academic shoe-horn to slip the data into the frame prescribed. That this occurs unconsciously does not make it any less real. Moreover, rigid adherence to a conceptual schema restricts the range of the political scientist's observable data so that he may fail to see what is taking place outside of his frame of reference. For example, the NAACP can be handled in the equilibrium model, but Black Power cannot.

It should be made clear that the editors have no particular quarrel here with the long and distinguished conservative tradition. Rather, it is the pretensions of the behavioralists to freedom from values to which we call attention. As LaPalombara states it, it is presumptuous at best for them to claim to have solved the "Mannheim Paradox."

To lessen the possibility of being misunderstood, it should be made clear that comments on the conservatism of scholarly writing of the behavioralists implies nothing about their non-professional conduct. For all we know they may march in civil rights demonstrations, sign anti-Vietnam petitions, and have supported President Johnson over Mr. Goldwater. Nevertheless, none of their private commitments or lack of commitment has any bearing on the function of this volume. It is raised only because we have been challenged by such unfortunate statements as "How can you call Mr. ——— conservative? I know he signed a petition [or marched in a demonstration]."

While C. Wright Mills called attention in 1959 to "the unexamined conservatism and scientific pretensions of The Behaviorist Scientists,"¹³ this volume of readings is a modest beginning at making explicit the conservative bias of the behavioralists. Given the historical connec-

¹³ Irving Louis Horowitz (ed.), *Power, Politics and People: The Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1963), p. 226.

6 Introduction

tion between conservative theory and mistrust of democracy, it is not surprising to find that the behavioralist's conservatism is joined by an unmistakable fear of popular democracy.

Second, the behavioralists have not only shown that the concept of democracy developed by the classical theorists such as Mills is not translated into practice in the major Western democracies; they have also shown themselves to be not unhappy about these results of their empirical research.¹⁴ They are opposed to any massive extension of democratic participation in the political process. They favor the maintenance of the present low-level of citizenship involvement, and this they justify partly on the grounds that mass democracy, mass movements and high-level participation are to be feared as first steps towards a totalitarian order and partly on the grounds that popular democracy is unmanageable and chaotic. Undoubtedly there are dangers in mass movements and there is also a lot of apathy and ignorance in the Western democracies, but the ideal of an active, enlightened and informed citizenry is a goal that many continue to hold.

Of the articles included in this reader, those by Davis, Goldschmidt, Walker, and Duncan-Lukes address themselves most directly to the behavioralists' writings on democracy. They require the reader to reexamine what is happening to a noble tradition of democracy: a prescriptive vision that, while never synthesized in the writing of any one political theorist, nor ever realized in practice, has always been an integral part of the humanist tradition. Though understood better by some than others, this vision has served as a goal and as an ideal to all who would call themselves democrats. Democratic theory contains many elements, but clearly near the center of any understanding are these concepts: (1) individual self-realization requires participation in the

¹⁴ See P. H. Partridge, "Politics, Philosophy, Ideology," *Political Studies*, Vol. IX (1961), pp. 217-235; and Peter Bachrach, *The Theory of Democratic Elitism: A Critique* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967). Many of the behavioralists are lifelong liberals, but Robert Paul Wolff has pointed out that a preoccupation with stability has resulted in their viewing widespread political participation in a manner that would have surprised earlier generations of liberals: "Some years ago . . . political scientists began to argue that voter apathy was a source of political stability since a phlegmatic public was unlikely to support extremist demagogues or disturb the public peace with street riots and revolutions. One might have expected liberals to react to this discovery by deciding that political stability was not worth having at the price of a stagnant polity. Instead, they have taken to stating in forthright terms that political apathy is a Good Thing!" —Robert Paul Wolff (ed.), *Political Man and Social Man: Readings in Political Philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 10.

control of one's own destiny; (2) each citizen holds an idea of the public good or public interest; the candidate or government official appeals to this idea, and such an appeal evokes a response on the part of the citizen; and (3) man is a political animal and cannot achieve his full development in private group associational life, but can only realize his uniquely human nature as a political man participating in the larger social order. The "New Democracy" of the behavioralists has no more in common with real democracy than Mao's "New Democracy."

Finally, the behavioralists may be termed "anti-political."¹⁵ In their attempt to turn political studies into a value-free "science," they have shown a marked tendency to throw out politics altogether. They seem to select their topics not by any criteria of political significance but rather by criteria determined by their methodology, e.g., "Is the matter to be examined subject to empirical verification, can it be quantified?" *Method* Thus they become prisoners of their own methodology. Since they fail to address themselves to questions of great concern to their students and to the public at large, such as Vietnam and the civil rights movement, which have revitalized the American political scene, their work often seems trivial, narrow and apolitical. Indeed, from our observations conditions have not changed from those referred to by Rogow in 1957.¹⁶ In discussion both with colleagues and with students one is struck by the fact that the periodicals which seem most politically vital, relevant, stimulating, and thoughtful are *Commentary*, *Dissent*, *New Republic*, *Encounter*, *Ramparts*, and a host of other small journals of opinion. These appear to have a vitality, an immediacy, and a sense of significance which demonstrates that the "Great Issues" are not now dead, if they ever were. In sharp contrast to their concern is the almost complete absence of any reference to articles in academic political science

¹⁵ The late V. O. Key, Jr., stated that "a considerable proportion of the literature commonly classified under the heading of 'political behavior' has no real bearing on politics, or at least that its relevance has not been made apparent."—V. O. Key, Jr., "The Politically Relevant in Surveys," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. XXIV (1960), p. 54.

¹⁶ Arnold A. Rogow, "Whatever Happened to the Great Issues?", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LI (1957), p. 770. Rogow is still expressing concern: "In recent years the most significant discussions of how the [political] 'pie is cut up' have originated not with political scientists but with such non-academics as Michael Harrington, Ben Seligman, Bernard Nossiter, H. Brand, and Gabriel Kolko. Nor does it appear that we have had much to say about the civil rights movement which is both cause and effect in relation to the 'pie.'" (*Midwest Journal of Political Science*, Vol. X (1966), p. 146.)

8 Introduction

journals, because such articles seldom seem to have anything of significance to say about those topics which appear to us urgently in need of intellectual scrutiny.¹⁷

It is not sufficient that as individuals the behavioralists support the civil rights movement and are concerned about American foreign policy; what is needed is for them to accept their professional responsibility and bring their dispassionate judgment to bear on an objective academic analysis of the great issues which are of such vital importance to both students and the general public. In a sense, the approach of the behavioralists may be considered analogous with that of the German Idealists in that their work seems unrelated to the needs and concerns of the times, and in spite of their interest in empirical study have concocted their own ivory tower out of jargon and "scientism." A young contemporary German sociologist critical of the behavioral school puts the case as follows:

Politics is one of the most exciting subjects of study for the social scientist. It would be a great shame indeed, if by an undue concern with methods of limited applicability, we managed to dampen this excitement for our students, our public, and for ourselves.¹⁸

¹⁷ Cf. C. W. Harrington's Letter to the Editor published in the *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LX, December 1966, p. 998: "This outburst of passion from one apathetic, still, small voice is a plaintive cry for reason. It is a direct result of an evening spent reading the September issue. There is but one article in it—I'll not specify which one—that does not read as though written with the aid of a computer, or in some cases, actually written by a computer itself. Moreover, that computer was programmed to turn out lower-case Greek letters, mathematic symbols, and such recurrent cant words and phrases as 'stochastic,' 'probabilistic,' 'cognitive dissonance,' 'decision-making processes,' 'simulation,' 'variance,' and more.

"May I make a belated suggestion? It is a suggestion, I realize now, that should have been on your questionnaire. Could future issues of the *Review* come out in two editions? One of these could continue to be called the *American Political Science Review*. It would carry articles dealing with political science. For the other edition I offer the title *American Computer Fondlers' Review*. It would carry articles of the type represented by most of those in the September issue."

For an equally candid comment, see Frederick L. Schuman's Letter to the Editor in *ibid.*, Vol. LXI, March 1967, p. 149.

¹⁸ Ralf Dahrendorf, "Three Symposia on Political Behavior," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 29 (1964), p. 736. See also Henry S. Kariel, *The Decline of American Pluralism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961): "The American political scene . . . might well be approached with more affection and wonder, with less of that methodological sophistication which makes so much of the 'literature' of political science unreadable." (pp. 299-300.) Kariel develops

As the title of this volume implies, it is the failure of the behavioralists to address themselves to genuinely significant political matters that concerns us most. By establishing methodology as the most relevant criterion for research they turn the students of politics into political eunuchs. Yet important political questions will continue to be discussed by the poet, the Bohemian fringe, the propagandist and the opportunist. In fact, one is struck by the renewed interest in politics of students and the public at large; the only place where a discussion of politics is not likely to take place is in the political science journals and in the political science classrooms.

Fortunately, though, this is only partially the case, because many (perhaps most) political scientists are still unreconstructed. But, as we indicated in the beginning of this introduction, the "new orthodoxy" is now setting the pace. A spell of "legitimacy" surrounds the "behavioral approach" and anyone not succumbing to its "mystique" runs the risks and suffers the disadvantages commonly associated with being illegitimate. However, if the truly great advances in society and in science continue to come from those who refuse to accept the prevailing orthodoxies, then there shall always be a place in our discipline for the great man of imagination and daring who refuses to accept the limitations of either a prevailing ideology or methodology. An excellent case in point is the late V. O. Key, who, while regarded by many as a behavioralist, never allowed himself to be dominated by his methodology. In fact, his greatness becomes apparent precisely where he leaves the narrow confines of his empirical data. Similar observations might well be made of Harold Lasswell. One might conclude that a great political scientist is at his best when he transcends his methodology.

For some years conservative critics of the behavioral school, notably Leo Strauss of Chicago and his disciples, have written extensively on this subject. The most directly relevant critique is *Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics*, edited by Herbert J. Storing.¹⁹

The differences between this volume and the one edited by Storing are numerous. The Storing volume argues that some things should not

this theme in a more recent work, *Promises of Politics* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966). ✓

¹⁹ Herbert J. Storing (ed.), *Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962). See also the highly critical review essay by John H. Schaar and Sheldon S. Wolin, and the rejoinder, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. LVII (1963), pp. 125-160.

10 Introduction

be analyzed; this one tends to argue that some things *can not* be analyzed. The Storing volume treats methodology as a fad and regards the behavioralists as naive; this book tends to view the emphasis on methodology as a pathological condition and the "establishment" of behavioralism as a restricting orthodoxy. The Storing volume assumes that real knowledge is philosophical; this volume affirms that real knowledge of the political world is practical knowledge. The Storing volume desires to substitute one orthodoxy for another; this volume opposes the establishment of any orthodoxy as such, and maintains that there are many paths to the kingdom. It emphasizes in the very broadest sense the necessity to continue the discourse between all students of politics.

The critique presented in this reader, calling attention to the "behavioral syndrome" of *conservatism, fear of popular democracy, and avoidance of vital political issues*, may be properly described as a "liberal" critique. These selections, we feel, will not only be useful in seminars and courses dealing with current developments in the state of the discipline, but will also be of interest to all students—whether in universities or not—concerned with the tenor of political discourse in American society.

O N E

The New Realism of the Behavioralists

The three articles in this section are all critical of the behavioralists' attention to the pseudopolitics of abstract systems, models, and elaborate games. The authors contend that political research must address itself to real problems in their real settings, even if this involves a sacrifice of methodological precision. In short, they maintain that political science must be political as well as scientific. ✓

*Christian Bay**

Politics and Pseudopolitics:
A Critical Evaluation of
Some Behavioral Literature

A curious state of affairs has developed within the academic discipline that bravely calls itself Political Science—the discipline that in a much-quoted phrase has been called “a device, invented by university teachers, for avoiding that dangerous subject politics, without achieving science.”¹ A growing and now indeed a predominant proportion of leading American political scientists, the behavioralists, have become determined to achieve science. Yet in the process many of them remain open to the charge of strenuously avoiding that dangerous subject, politics.

Consider a recent essay on the behavioral persuasion in politics. The conclusion stresses the purpose of political inquiry: “The Goal is Man.” There is to be a commitment to some humane purpose after all. But what kind of man? A democratic kind of man, a just man, or

* I am indebted to my friend Herbert H. Hyman, who has been generous with advice for improvements on an earlier draft. It should not be inferred that he is in agreement with opinions expressed in this paper, or that he might not once again find much to criticize in it. At a later stage I have received helpful suggestions also from Sidney Verba and Andrew Hacker.

¹ Alfred Cobban, “The Decline of Political Theory,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 48 (1953), p. 335.

SOURCE: *The American Political Science Review*, LIX, 1 (March, 1965), 39–51. Reprinted with permission.

Christian Bay is professor of political science at the University of Alberta, Canada.

perhaps a power-seeking man? The answer follows: "These are philosophical questions better left to the philosophers." ² Behavioral students of politics should, as scientists, engage in no value judgments concerning the kind of man or society their researches ought to serve. This is the general inference to be drawn, not only from this particular essay, but from much of the contemporary literature on political behavior.

As Heinz Eulau, the author, points out in the same essay, the area of behavioral political science includes a particular domain called policy science, in which empirical inquiry is geared to explicitly stated goal formulations; within *this* domain "political science, as all science, should be put in the service of whatever goals men pursue in politics." *Any* goals? Not quite; in this context Eulau points out that the choice of what goals to serve is a matter of personal ethics, and incidentally reminds us that behavioral research can be readily utilized also for purposes conflicting with the original ones. "In this sense, at least, science is value-free. I don't think the scientist can escape this dilemma of having his work misused without giving up his calling." And the author concludes with these words: "Only if he places himself at the service of those whose values he disagrees with does he commit intellectual treason."

In these pages I am concerned with sins less serious than intellectual treason; perhaps intellectual indolence is a more accurate term. My argument will be that much of the current work on political behavior generally fails to articulate its very real value biases, and that the political impact of this supposedly neutral literature is generally conservative and in a special sense anti-political. In conclusion I propose to develop a perspective on political inquiry that would relate it more meaningfully to problems of human needs and values; in that context I will suggest some important but neglected problems lending themselves to empirical research.

I am not about to argue that our investments in political behavior research have been too large; on the contrary, we need much more work in this area. But my principal concern is to argue for a more pressing need: an intellectually more defensible and a politically more responsible theoretical framework for guiding and interpreting our empirical work; a theory that would give more meaning to our research, even at the expense of reducing its conceptual and operational neatness.

² Heinz Eulau, *The Behavioral Persuasion in Politics* (New York, 1963), p. 133 and pp. 133-37.

I

It is necessary first to clarify some basic terms in which my concern is stated.

The prevailing concepts of "politics" in the literature under consideration are surely an important source of the difficulty. Definitions gravitate toward the most conspicuous *facts* and shy away from all reference to more norm-laden and less easily measurable aspects of social life. For the sake of brevity, let us consider only the most recent formulation by one of the unquestionably most influential political scientists of the present generation: "A political system is any persistent pattern of human relationships that involves, to a significant extent, power, rule, or authority."⁸ My objection is not primarily to the extension of the reference of "political" to private as well as to public associations, and even to clans and families as well; rather, it is to the absence of any reference to a public purpose. Research work on power, rule, or authority can contribute significantly to our political knowledge, even if the data come from contexts not ordinarily thought of as political. But its significance must be gauged in relation to some criteria; until these are articulated and justified, or at any rate chosen, we can only intuit whether our researches on, say, power behavior are tackling significant or trivial issues.

"Politics" should refer to power, but the term should also refer to some conception of human welfare or the public good. The achievement of Plato and Aristotle is in part a result of their starting out by asking some of the right questions; above all, what is politics *for*? Their limitations were logical and methodological or, if you prefer, conceptual: they had not learned to distinguish between verifiable *descriptive* statements, statements of *normative* positions, and (empirically empty and normatively neutral) *analytical* statements, including definitions and other equations.

Once these distinctions had been developed, a process that began with David Hume, it became easy and fashionable to expose fallacies in Plato and Aristotle; but instead of attacking the ancient and perennial problems of politics with our new and sharper conceptual tools, recent generations of political scientists appear to have sought safety in seeking to exclude the normative realm altogether from the scope of their

⁸ Robert Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, 1963), p. 6.

scientific inquiry. "Politics" has consequently been defined in a simple institutional or behavioral manner, unrelated to normative conceptions of any sort. Ironically, most modern behavioralists are back with the Greeks again in their assumption that political inquiry can be pursued by much the same methods as natural science inquiry; they have adjusted to David Hume and the modern logical positivists by the neat device of definitions that limit the scope of their inquiry to observable behavior.

This surely is a stance of premature closure. The alternative proposed here is to insist on the need for a political theory that deals with *basic human needs* as well as overt desires and other observable aspects of behavior. The task of improving concepts and methods toward establishing a stricter science of politics is formidable; but let us avoid establishing an orthodoxy that would have the whole profession contract for a fainthearted purchase of rigor at the price of excluding much of the meat and spirit of politics.

As a modest and fragmentary beginning toward a more appropriate theory, let me suggest a distinction between "politics" and "pseudopolitics." I would define as *political* all activity aimed at improving or protecting conditions for the satisfaction of human needs and demands in a given society or community, according to some universalistic scheme of priorities, implicit or explicit.⁴ *Pseudopolitical* in this paper refers to activity that resembles political activity but is exclusively concerned with either the alleviation of personal neuroses or with promoting private or private interest-group advantage, deterred by no articulate or disinterested conception of what would be just or fair to other groups.

Pseudopolitics is the counterfeit of politics. The relative prevalence of the counterfeit variety of democratic politics presumably depends on many ascertainable factors, including a society's degree of commercialization and the degree of socio-economic mobility (or the size of the stakes in the competitive struggle); on the other hand, the proportion of pseudopolitical activity would correlate negatively with the amount of psychological security, the amount of social welfare-type security, and the amount of political education effectively taught.

For present purposes it is not necessary to demonstrate in detail

"Priorities" here refers to norms for guiding the choice among conflicting needs and demands. Political ideals and visions of the good life enter in here, and would do so even if our knowledge of needs and of human nature were as extensive as our knowledge of demands and of social determinants of "public opinion."

how the distinction between politics in the narrower sense and pseudopolitics can be made operationally useful. Suffice it to say that only a saint is pure from the taint of pseudopolitics and that hardly any pseudopolitician would be *wholly* without concern for the public welfare; mixed motives, in proportions varying from one person to the next and from one situation to the next, pervade all actions. It is a difficult but surely not an impossible task to develop indices for assessing the relative prevalence of political versus pseudopolitical incentives in voters and other political actors; the only essential prerequisite is to decide that the task must be tackled.

Without attempting to make this kind of distinction, untidy as it may at first appear to many a behavioralist, I don't see how we can begin to approach a condition of tidiness in our discussions of the *political significance* of research, or of the *political responsibility* of political scientists. But what should we mean by these two highly eulogistic terms; might we not be better advised to shun them altogether? The bulk of this paper seeks to demonstrate some sorry consequences of the latter course. We cannot avoid the realm of normative issues unless we really wish to disclaim all political significance for our work. Probably very few in our profession would adopt this position.

Although explicit cognizance of normative assumptions in his theoretical frame of reference is likely to entail some inconvenience for the researcher, he will by no means be blocked from continuing much of his present work. It should be clear that all competent research on pseudopolitical behavior illuminates political behavior as well, as the relative presence of one signals the relative absence of the other. In the real world the two aspects of behavior always coexist. My quarrel is not with research on pseudopolitics *per se*, but with the way findings are usually reported and interpreted. I object to the tendency in much of the behavior literature to deal with the pseudopolitical aspects of behavior almost exclusively, and to imply that the prevalence of pseudopolitics is and always will be the natural or even the desirable state of affairs in a democracy. Consequently, I object also to the absence of interest in research that could reveal some of the determinants of the relative prevalence of pseudopolitical behavior on our political arena, by which we might learn more about how we may advance toward a more strictly political consciousness, in the sense of concern for the public interest and for the future, in our population.

Now, how should we define political significance and political responsibility? In my conceptual world the two terms are tied together; I would judge degrees of political significance of research studies in the same way that I would judge degrees of political responsibility of political scientists (in the role of theorist-researcher, as distinct from the role of citizen). A research report is politically significant to the extent that it contributes to the kinds of knowledge most needed by politically responsible political scientists.

"Political responsibility" in this paper refers to the extent to which the social scientist observes the canons of rationality on two levels, which I shall call formal and substantive.^{4A} Formal rationality refers to the familiar notion of clarifying the objectives first and then paying heed to the best available knowledge when seeking ways and means to implement them. Competent behavioral research in political science is highly rational in this formal sense; this is what the extensive work in theory and methodology is *for*.

The lack of political responsibility that I ascribe to much political behavior literature relates to the other level of rationality, the substantive level, which involves articulate attention to questions of fundamental commitment in social and political research literature. Problems of human welfare (including justice, liberty, security, etc.), the objects of political research and of politics, can be adequately studied, and dealt with, only if their *ought*-side is investigated as carefully as their *is*-side. Ought-side inquiry must pertain to wants (or desires or, if insisted on, demands) as well as needs. Political communication must be analysed carefully so that we may learn what aspects of *wants* are most salient and could be frustrated only at the cost of resentment, alienation, or upheaval. Yet, only analysis of data on wants in terms of a theory of *needs* will permit us to evaluate wants and aspects of wants with a view to longer-term consequences of their relative satisfaction or frustration.

There will be more to say about wants and needs in the concluding section. At this point it should only be added that the student of politics, once he has adopted a conception of human needs, should proceed from there to make explicit his inferences about political objectives and his choice of commitments with the utmost care. If this kind of inquiry is neglected, as it certainly is in the political science curricula in most of

^{4A} Karl Mannheim employs a similar dichotomy of terms, though with different concepts, in his *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (New York, 1954), pp. 51-60.

our universities, the danger is that the political scientist unwittingly becomes the tool of other people's commitments. And *theirs* may be even less responsibly arrived at; conceivably, the expertise of the political scientist may come to serve the irrational purposes of genteel bigotry in domestic policies or of paranoid jingoism and reckless gambling with our chances of survival in foreign policies. If advice-giving social scientists don't feel called on to invest their best intellectual energies in studying the ultimate ends of our national policies, it is unlikely that anyone else of influence will; most active politicians have, after all, more immediately pressing worries, and these are anyway the kinds of concerns they are best trained to handle.

Intellectual treason, to return to Eulau's phrase, is probably a remote hazard in our profession. For, rather than placing himself in the service "of those whose values he disagrees with," the political scientist usually will by natural, uninvestigated processes come to agree with the prevailing values of his profession, of the major foundations and of his government, at least on the more basic public policy objectives and assumptions. His training and career incentives focus on formal rationality. It is fortunate that many social scientists for other reasons tend to be humane and liberal individuals. We will be far better off, however, if we can make it respectable or even mandatory for many more of our researchers to be guided in their choice of theory and problems by their own articulated values, instead of acting willy-nilly on the supposedly neutral values impressed on them by the conventional wisdom of their profession.

II

In the contemporary political science literature it is by no means unusual to see the articulation of political norms begin and end with a commitment to "democracy" in some unspecified sense. Fifteen years ago a respected political scientist suggested a more critical orientation: "The democratic myth is that the people are inherently wise and just, and that they are the real rulers of the republic. These propositions do have meaning; but if they become, as they do even among scholars, matters of faith, then scientific progress has been sacrificed in the interest of a morally satisfying demagogy."⁵ This advice has not been

⁵Gabriel A. Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York, 1950), p. 4.

generally heeded. Even today many political scientists are writing as if democracy unquestionably is a good thing, from which unquestionably good things will flow, while at the same time they profess a disinterest in settling value issues. "The only cure for the ills of democracy is more democracy," is still the implicit slogan of quite a few social scientists, who seem unaware of even the *conceptual* difficulties involved in developing generally useful criteria, let alone a rationale, for "more democracy." To put it bluntly, it appears that a good number of otherwise able political scientists confuse a vaguely stated conventional "democratism" ⁶ with scientific objectivity.

That behavioral research not explicitly related to problems of democracy tends to be vague in its implications for normative democratic theory is perhaps to be expected. It is paradoxical that some of the leading behavioral writers on *democracy* continue to write as if they want to have it both ways: to be rigorously value-neutral and at the same time be impeccable champions of conventional pluralist democracy. To straddle on a sharp issue would not be comfortable; if we want to write as good democrats and as logical positivists, too, it is perhaps necessary to be obtuse on issues like "why democracy?" or "what is democracy for?" and, indeed, "what is democracy?"

For a first example, take the late V. O. Key's most recent book on *Public Opinion and American Democracy*.⁷ Here we are presented with an admirably organized survey of what is now known of the characteristics of contemporary public opinion and of the extent of its bearing on American governmental decision processes. Yet for all these facts about public opinion, there is hardly a hint of their implications, in the author's judgment, for any of the relevant normative issues of democracy; what little is said on this score is uninformative indeed. For example, the point is made toward the end that political deviants "play a critical role in the preservation of the vitality of a democratic order as they urge alterations and modifications better to achieve the aspirations of men. Hence the fundamental significance of freedom of speech and agitation" (p. 555). There is no elaboration of this point, which one might take to be an important issue, considering the book's title and general subject. And there is no other discussion of what purpose all this political knowledge should serve. Is it the "preservation of the vitality of

⁶The term is from Leo Strauss. See his "Epilogue" in Herbert J. Storing, ed., *Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics* (New York, 1962), p. 326.

⁷New York, 1961.

a democratic order" as far as we can articulate the criteria for the best possible government, or for trends in the best direction? What does "vitality" mean here, and what aspects of our democracy are most in need of it? Is free speech valuable solely as a means to this rather obscurely conceived end?

Or take the volume on *Voting*, by a team of top-notch political sociologists.⁸ One of the book's two themes, we are told (p. x), is the social problem of how political preferences are formed, while the "confrontation of democratic theory with democratic practice is the second implied theme that runs throughout the book." There is much about certain kinds of practices, yes; but democratic theory is limited to a few examples of "impossible" demands of "traditional normative theory" on the role of the citizen: that he should be politically interested, knowledgeable and rational. These investigators find that most voters are indeed politically apathetic, ignorant and far from rational in their political behavior.

Given the second theme one might have expected the authors to raise some pertinent questions concerning the sense, if any, in which we nevertheless do have a democracy, or possibly the sense in which we nevertheless *ought* to be able to have a democracy, if what we have now does not fit this concept; or perhaps an attempt toward reformulating democratic norms in better accord with political realities, if the term "democracy" should be saved for new uses.

Nothing of the sort happens. Instead, the authors make the happy discovery that the *system of democracy* that we have "does meet certain requirements for a going political organization"; indeed, as it is said just before, "it often works with distinction" (p. 312). What is good and bad about the system is left in the dark, as is the question of criteria for "distinction." Instead, we are given a list of dimensions of citizen behavior, and are told that the fact that individuals differ on these various dimensions (*e.g.*, involvement—indifference) somehow is exactly what the modern democratic system requires. It all ends well, then; and in parting the authors leave us with this comforting if question-begging assurance: "Twentieth-century political theory—both analytic and *normative*—will arise *only* from hard and long observation of the actual

⁸ Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld and William N. McPhee, *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1954).

world of politics, closely identified with the deeper problems of practical politics." (p. 323. Italics supplied.) *Only?*

Turn now to a widely and deservedly praised book with the promising title, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. Robert Dahl explains his choice of title by asserting that "there is no democratic theory—only democratic theories. This fact suggests that we had better proceed by considering some representative theories in order to discover what kinds of problems they raise . . ." ⁹ And in the landscape of behavioral literature this work does stand out as an impressive exercise in logical analysis. Excellent critical evaluations of the Madisonian and the populist-type democratic theories are offered; but subsequently Dahl changes his tack to what he calls (p. 63) the descriptive method: under "polyarchal democracy" he seeks to develop empirical criteria for a concept of democracy based on our knowledge of existing species. As we would expect of a competent behavioralist, the author develops some enlightening perspectives on how "the American hybrid" in fact appears to be functioning.

Penetrating as this account of the basic operating procedures of the American democracy is, the author's criteria for evaluating the result are surprisingly inarticulate and *ad hoc*. He will *not* try to determine whether it is a desirable system of government, he assures us toward the end of the book; and then proceeds to do just that, but vaguely:

it appears to be a relatively efficient system for reinforcing agreement, encouraging moderation, and maintaining social peace in a restless and immoderate people operating a gigantic, powerful, diversified, and incredibly complex society. This is no negligible contribution, then, that Americans have made to the arts of government—and to that branch, which of all the arts of politics is the most difficult, the art of democratic government.

These are Dahl's parting words.

Having subjected the assumptions, hypotheses, implied definitions, and even the presumed value axioms of two theories of democracy to painstaking analysis, the author's ambition not to discuss the desirability of the American system of government would be difficult to understand for someone unacquainted with the currently prevailing fashions among behavioralists. To study the definitional characteristics of this hybrid species of government and of the genus, "polyarchal democracy," is a

⁹ Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956, p. 1.

worthwhile endeavor, to be sure, but would in my opinion assume far greater significance if pursued within a framework of value assumptions, however tentatively presented, from which could be derived operational criteria for judging what aspects of a functioning democracy ought to be valued and strengthened, as against other aspects that should be deplored and, if possible, counteracted. Why does the author never say clearly whether in *his* view democracy is something to be valued in itself, and maximized (as he takes Madisonian theory to assert), or as valuable for some specified ends (for example, for maximizing political equality, after the fashion of populists)?

In a Preface to democratic theory, and one which demonstrates a high order of rigor in analyzing other theories of democracy, the author's reluctance even to begin to develop operating criteria toward making meaningful the present system, or to provide pointers toward its more meaningful further development, is as astounding as it is disappointing. Reluctantly one concludes that Dahl in this particular context behaves like most political behavioralists: he feels he can permit himself to write normatively about political purposes, it would seem, only if they are stated in terms of "democracy" and are reasonably indeterminate, lest the suspicion should arise that he is pleading for some politically partisan position. Thus, a demeanor of scientific objectivity is maintained, and so is a persistently implied commitment to a certain political bias, which favors democracy roughly as it now exists in the West, or in this country.

III

Leo Strauss charges the behavioralists with a bias toward liberal democracy, and rightly so, in comparison to his position. Yet in some respects the bias of much behavioralist political literature is profoundly conservative, although this is a species of conservatism rather different from Strauss's. Philosophically speaking, this behaviorally oriented conservatism frequently includes an *anti-political* dimension that is not found in Strauss's work.¹⁰ What is *anti-political* is the assumption,

¹⁰ This is not to deny that the Straussian position is more authoritarian and far less respectful of the right to radical dissent, as is to be expected when a corner on objective truth is being claimed. Cf. especially Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy and Other Studies* (Glencoe, 1959); and his "Epilogue" in Herbert J. Storing, ed., *op. cit.* See also Walter Berns, "The Behavioral Sciences and the Study of Political Things: The Case of Christian Bay's *The Structure of Freedom*," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 55 (1961), pp. 550-59.

explicit or implicit, that politics, or at any rate American politics, is and must always remain primarily a system of rules for peaceful battles between competing private interests, and not an arena for the struggle toward a more humane and more rationally organized society.

Consider S. M. Lipset's recent suggestion that the age-old search for the good society can be terminated, for we have got it now. Democracy as we know it "is the good society itself in operation." Not that our democracy cannot still be improved upon, but roughly speaking, it appears, "the give-and-take of a free society's internal struggles" is the best that men can hope for. Our society is so good that Lipset welcomes, at least for the West, what he sees as a trend toward replacing political ideology with sociological analysis.¹¹

This is an extreme statement, although by a leading and deservedly famous political sociologist. We cannot saddle behaviorists in general with responsibility for such phrasing. But in substance, as we shall see, the same tendency toward affirming the *status quo* and, what is worse, toward disclaiming the importance and even the legitimacy of political ideology, and ideals, is discernible in other leading behaviorally oriented works as well.

Let us note incidentally that all the behavioral works referred to so far wind up affirming that American democracy on the whole works well, while failing to articulate the criteria on which this judgment is based.¹² In fairness it should be added that probably all these writers would make an exception for the place of the Negro and certain other underprivileged groups or categories for whom our democracy admittedly does not work so well; there are flaws, then, but fundamentally all is well or else will become well without any basic changes.

What is more troublesome than this somewhat conservative commitment to a somewhat liberal conception of democracy¹³—whether

¹¹ Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Garden City, 1960), esp. pp. 403 and 415.

¹² An interesting attempt to evaluate the 1952 Presidential election in terms of five criteria of democratic consent (as opposed to non-rational responses to manipulated processes) is reported in Morris Janowitz and Dwaine Marvick, *Competitive Pressure and Democratic Consent* (Ann Arbor, Bureau of Government, University of Michigan, 1956). The five criteria are chosen somewhat haphazardly, but they are carefully and ingeniously operationalized and brought to bear on available data. The study shows what could just as well be done, in years to come, within a more carefully and systematically stated framework of political objectives and norms.

¹³ Though perhaps paradoxical, the statement is not self-contradictory. A

acknowledged or surreptitious—is the anti-political orientation referred to a moment ago; the failure to see politics as potentially, at least, an instrument of reason, legitimately dedicated to the improvement of social conditions.

Within a brief space that allows no extensive documentation perhaps the next best thing to do is to consider for a moment a recent example of a behavioralist approach in which, for a change, the underlying assumptions are spelled out with commendable clarity, and then let the reader judge to what extent other literature referred to above may not implicitly rest on similar starkly anti-political premises.

James M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock have called their book *The Calculus of Consent*, with the subtitle *Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy*.¹⁴ The task set for the book, we are told in the Preface, is “to analyze the calculus of the rational individual when he is faced with questions of constitutional choice”; the authors, both of whom have most of their training in economics, intend to develop what they take to be the rationale for group action in the public sector in a free society—*i.e.*, for political action.

The authors take pains to assert the value-free nature of their approach to the science of politics. True, they choose to go along with “the Western philosophical tradition” in so far as they consider the human individual “the primary philosophical entity” (p. 11). From here on, supposedly, we are dealing with the political processes that flow from the desire of all individuals to try to maximize whatever they may value. “The grail-like search for some ‘public interest’ apart from, and independent of, the separate interests of the individual participants in social choice” (p. 12) is not the concern of *these* authors.

Only in one limited sense do the authors recognize a sort of collective interest in a free society: “it is rational to *have a constitution*” (p. 21), or a set of rules for deciding how decisions in the public sector are to be arrived at; *constitutional* issues are in principle to be settled by unanimity, while *operational* issues—all other political issues—must be

democracy that guarantees many liberties to people of most persuasions, and in theory to everybody, may well be considered a liberal democracy. Freedom of speech and related freedoms have a strong appeal to most intellectuals, many of whom may become staunch conservatives *because* they believe in preserving their liberal democracy. Some, indeed, will become fixated on the need for defense of the social order to the point of ignoring the plight of poverty-stricken fellow-citizens whose formal liberty may seem worthless to themselves.

¹⁴ Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1962.

settled according to constitutional provisions. The authors see no rationale for majoritarianism as a way of deciding, unless a constitution happens to require it in given contexts; consequently, constitutions can be changed only by unanimity, according to this "individualistic theory of political process," as one of the authors has lately named the theory.¹⁵

In his more recent statement, Buchanan recognizes as an "entirely reasonable interpretation" (p. 7) that this approach to political processes can be seen as a model for the defense of the *status quo*. His most important rejoinder is that "analysis must start from somewhere, and the existing set of rules and institutions is the only place from which it is possible to start" (p. 7).

The previously cited writings of leading behavioralists have been less explicit and also less bold in showing the way from assertedly value-free premises toward a conservative and in my sense anti-political orientation. Yet, in all the works given critical attention above, there are normative ambiguities wide enough to make room for a theory such as the one offered by Buchanan and Tullock. This is not to say that Eulau, Key, Berelson *et al.*, Dahl, or Lipset would concur with Buchanan and Tullock in their normative position. But their approach to politics is philosophically similar in its emphasis on prevailing behavior patterns here and now as the thing to study and in its rejection of the legitimacy of normative positions as frameworks for research (except in a normatively *ad hoc* policy science context). Buchanan and Tullock have been able to explicate in considerable detail *one* rationale for an implicit stance that appears to be widely shared by students of politics today.

If a similar orientation were to be adopted in medical literature, its scope would in the main be confined to studying how patients choose to cope or at any rate do cope with their pathologies, while omitting or neglecting fundamental study of conditions for possible treatment and prevention.

IV

Unlike other behavioral literature, modern works in comparative politics almost always focus on real political problems; when political institutions are compared cross-nationally or cross-culturally, pseudo-

¹⁵ James M. Buchanan, "An Individualistic Theory of Political Process." Paper prepared for delivery at the 1963 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Commodore Hotel, New York City.

political behavior can more readily be seen as dysfunctional in terms of some conception or other of the public good; usually such conceptions are couched in terms of "modernization" or "development," at least if comparisons are cross-cultural as well as cross-national. The point is that developmental perspectives and therefore political purposes are ever-present in this literature, even if they are not often well articulated. Yet what is particularly impressive in some of this literature is its conceptual and theoretical scope, including the stress on psychological as well as social component explanations of political behavior, and on the need for integrating micro-analyses of personalities and small groups with macro-analyses of large collectivities.¹⁶

Concerned as the modern students of comparative politics have been with substantive problems, they have resisted temptations to pursue their inquiries according to immediately practical considerations such as the availability of operational indices and techniques of measurement.¹⁷ On the contrary, insistent efforts have been made to innovate concepts that would take account of variables which are not as yet accessible to observation and quantification—concepts such as political culture, political socialization, political identity, and political style, for example. The long-term strategy appears to be to start out with concepts broad enough to encompass all significant aspects of political reality, and then work toward parcelling out component concepts which come closer to corresponding to variables that can be observed, perhaps indirectly and by tentative indices at first. Thus the theoretical working hypotheses can gradually, it is hoped, be subjected to increasingly direct and stringent tests. This is a far cry from the piecemeal approach to political (or pseudopolitical) reality in many other works, which almost exclusively pays attention to disparate empirical relationships while neglecting to consider the possible systematic-theoretical reasons we might have for taking an interest in them.

¹⁶ Some of the milestones in this literature are Gabriel A. Almond, "Comparative Political Systems," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 18 (1956), pp. 391–409; Almond and James S. Coleman, eds., *The Politics of the Developing Areas* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1960); Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1963).

¹⁷ For contrast, consider this statement on the ways of other behavioralists: "The focus of the political behaviorist, however, does not seem to be a result of the state of political theory. Elections have been intensively studied because they lend themselves to the methodology of empirical research into politics." Morris Janowitz, Deil Wright, and William Delany, *Public Administration and the Public—Perspectives Toward Government in a Metropolitan Community* (Ann Arbor, Bureau of Government, University of Michigan, 1958), p. 2.

There is also this to be said about the modern comparative politics literature, however, that its conceptual and theoretical innovations have as yet failed to make a significant dent in the same democratic myth that Almond himself—the leader in this field—has warned us against years ago. The dilemma already discussed, of desiring to support democracy and adopt a stance of value neutrality, too, has not as yet been satisfactorily resolved in this literature, either. And this failure is paradoxical in this particular context, in part because the ostensible chief concern is with “development” or “modernization” as the dependent variable, so that the question of development toward *what* immediately suggests itself. The failure is paradoxical also because these scholars have coined bold new concepts on the independent side of the ledger, and some have written extensively about concepts as far removed from realms of observation as “political culture” and “political identity.”¹⁸ Yet a concept such as “human need” has not been touched, and discussions of key terms like “political development” or “modernization” have been hampered, it would seem, by an unwillingness to question whether democratic ways or what kinds of democratic ways are most conducive to satisfying human needs.¹⁹

In the most extensive recent discussion of these concepts, La Palombara begins well with a warning that what many scholars appear to have in mind “when they speak of a modern or developed system is one that approximates the institutional and structural configuration that we associate with the Anglo-American (in any event, the Western) democratic systems” (p. 10). He calls this conceptualization culture-bound; yet in the same and the following chapter he goes to considerable lengths himself in arguing for the use of the same kinds of culture-bound criteria to evaluate development or modernity abroad. While he contributes a useful discussion of different dimensions along which political change can be measured, he never inquires whether in other countries there might be other criteria of development of equal or greater significance than his own essentially Anglo-Saxon criteria. “One of the great dilemmas of many of the developing countries,” he writes, “is that they

¹⁸ Cf. Almond and Verba, *op. cit.*, and Lucian W. Pye, *Politics, Personality, and Nation Building: Burma's Search for Identity* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1962).

¹⁹ Concepts of modernization or development are discussed by James S. Coleman in Almond and Coleman, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 532–36; by Lucian W. Pye, ed., *Communication and Political Development* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 14–20; and by Joseph LaPalombara in his (ed.) *Bureaucracy and Political Development* (Princeton University Press, 1963), chs. 1 and 2.

seem to want economic development more than freedom" (p. 41), and the last term he takes as a matter of course to refer to pluralist institutions. "Why should it not be possible to raise a belief in and desire for democracy to the same level?" (p. 58). And in conclusion La Palombara asserts that we Americans must expand our efforts to export not only technical know-how "but our political ideology and reasonable facsimiles of our political institutions and practices as well." Without such an effort, he adds, he is reasonably confident that "the probability of attaining democratic configuration in most of the newer states is very low indeed" (pp. 60-61).

The main difficulty with this reasoning is that men are motivated, also politically, by their immediate needs and wants, and not by foreign orthodoxies. La Palombara speculates "whether it would not be possible to manipulate demands so that goals of political development enjoy a status equal to that of economic change" (p. 30), and suggests the encouragement of private as against collectively oriented enterprise for this end. The answer is surely a flat no: it is *not* possible, in most countries in which most people are economically underprivileged, to create a broad popular interest in pluralist democratic institutions. "Acceptance of the norms of democracy requires a high level of sophistication and ego security," writes Lipset, on the basis of a variety of loosely connected empirical data.²⁰ An active concern for the public welfare presupposes a liberation both from anxiety neuroses and from realistic fears concerning one's own and one's family's physical sustenance, welfare and security. To put it more succinctly, needs for food and safety take precedence over political interest; no amount of political manipulation could be expected to alter such priorities.

To be sure, individuals can be lured into "the game of politics" as advantageous careers under the right circumstances; but is this the kind of political development that the West should desire? If budding western-democracy-type pluralist institutions turn out to benefit only the middle and upper classes—as in many Latin American countries—then we should not be surprised if idealistic students and others with a passion for social justice, or for politics as distinct from pseudopolitics, may become disposed to reject the forms of pluralist democracy altogether.²¹

Nevertheless, the trend among political behavioralists, including

²⁰ *Political Man*, *op. cit.*, p. 115 and ch. 4.

²¹ Fidel Castro's wide following in Latin America can be plausibly explained in these terms.

students of comparative politics, appears to be toward a clean break not only with Plato's concern with justice as something above democracy, for the true philosopher; also, it seems that the classical conception of democracy as a system of rational deliberation for settling issues of justice and welfare is on its way out, *even as a political ideal*. Reference has been made to the *ad hoc* attempts of Berelson *et al.* to bring the norms of democracy in better accord with the facts of what I have termed pseudopolitical behavior. In *The Civic Culture* Almond and Verba present and discuss a variety of usefully differentiated survey data collected in five countries (United States, Britain, West Germany, Italy and Mexico). "What we have done in this book," they conclude, "is to spell out methodically the mixture of attitudes that support a democratic system. If it can create a more sober and informed appreciation of the nature and complexity of the problems of democratization, it will have served its purpose."²² But what kind of democracy? The theoretical point of departure is neither in a conception of human needs nor in the classical theories of democracy, but in such literature as has been discussed above—notably Dahl's *Preface to Democratic Theory* and the last chapter in Berelson's *Voting*. In fact, Almond and Verba emphatically reject the classical "rationality-activist" ideal of democratic citizenship in favor of a more balanced "parochial-subject-participant" orientation; in a healthy, stable democracy as they conceive it (and American political culture comes close even though it does not quite embody this ideal), "the democratic citizen is called on to pursue contradictory goals; he must be active, yet passive; involved, yet not too involved; influential, yet deferential."²³

Perhaps so, if the ultimate goal is democratic stability. And there is no denying, from my normative position, that democratic stability is valuable, and that many nations ought to have more of it. But is it the most important goal for political development; is it the goal that should serve as the basis for evaluating all other goals (whether wholly, in terms of instrumentality, or partially, in terms of compatibility)? Should we not instead hold, in Eulau's phrase, that "The Goal is Man"?

V

In the study of political behavior, "analysis must start from somewhere, and the existing set of rules and institutions is the only place

²² *Op. cit.*, p. 505 and ch. 15. ²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 478-79 and 440-41.

from which it is possible to start," according to Buchanan. Students of comparative politics have nevertheless demonstrated the feasibility of analysing political developments in some countries in terms of valuable outcomes achieved in others.²⁴ It remains to be shown that political behavior and institutions can be analysed also in terms of normative assumptions to the effect that the purpose of politics is to meet human needs and facilitate human development.

Contrary to an apparently prevailing assumption among political behavioralists, psychological phenomena are just as *real* as economic and voting behavior phenomena, even though admittedly less accessible to observation and measurement. Some more of the same conceptual boldness displayed in the recent literature on comparative politics is required if political inquiry is to become related to important human wants and needs. For one thing, we need to distinguish more clearly between pseudopolitical and more strictly political behavior, if we want to learn how to encourage the latter at the expense of the former.²⁵

A major conceptual and theoretical task is to develop a satisfactory theory of human needs and of the relationships between needs and *wants*—here referring to perceived or felt needs. Wants (or, synonymously, desires) and demands can be observed and measured by way of asking people or observing their behavior. Needs, on the other hand, can only be inferred from their hypothetical consequences for behavior or, more manifestly, from the actual consequences of their frustration. Whenever superficial wants are fulfilled but underlying needs remain frustrated, pathological behavior is likely to ensue.

Prior to the development of a viable theory of political development is at least a beginning toward a theory of individual human development. Such a beginning exists in psychological literature, but it has so far been inadequately drawn on by students of political behavior. Let me very briefly suggest the direction of this theorizing, and some of its implications for the study of political behavior.

Basic human needs are characteristics of the human organism, and they are presumably less subject to change than the social or even the physical conditions under which men live. Wants are sometimes mani-

²⁴ See especially Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow, *The Political Modernization of Japan and Turkey* (Princeton University Press, 1964).

²⁵ However, we should not assume without inquiry that *all* pseudopolitical behavior is dysfunctional for all high-priority human wants and needs; not, of course, that all varieties of political behavior are to be preferred to pseudopolitical self-seeking or neurotic striving.

festations of real needs, but, as Plato and many other wise men since have insisted, we cannot always infer the existence of needs from wants. Wants are often artificially induced by outside manipulation, or they may be neurotically based desires whose satisfaction fails to satisfy needs, or both. Emphasis on a civic-culture type of democracy as the goal for political development may well perpetuate a state of affairs in which human needs as seen by the political-minded (in my strict sense of "political") will remain in the shadow of much-advertised human wants as promoted by pseudo-politicians and other enterprisers whose horizons do not extend beyond their own occupational or career interests and status anxieties.²⁶

I say *may*, for I am raising a question rather than adopting a position. In order to investigate the relationship between needs and wants as they pertain to political functions we must start out with a tentative conception of priorities among human needs. The best available point of departure, in my opinion, is in A. H. Maslow's theory of a hierarchy of human needs; this theorizing ought to be drawn on until a more plausible and useful theory becomes available.

Maslow lists five categories of needs in the order of their assumed priority: (1) physical needs (air, water, food, etc.); (2) safety needs (assurance of survival and of continuing satisfaction of basic needs); (3) needs to love and be loved; (4) need for esteem (by self and others); and (5) need for self-actualization and growth. This list presents a hierarchy, according to Maslow, in the sense that the "less prepotent needs are minimized, even forgotten or denied. But when a need is fairly well satisfied, the next prepotent ('higher') need emerges, in turn to dominate the conscious life and to serve as the center of organization of behavior, since gratified needs are not active motivators." ²⁷ Note, however, that whenever in the course of a human life the "higher" needs have become activated, they are not necessarily extinguished as a result of later deprivation of "lower" or more basic needs.

²⁶ Joseph Tussman also stresses the danger of destroying the integrity of political communication when the modern bargaining approach to politics enters the "forum or tribunal" that a democratic electorate ought to constitute, according to classical theories of democracy. "We teach men to compete and bargain. Are we to be surprised, then, at the corruption of the tribunal into its marketplace parody?" *Obligation and the Body Politic* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 109 and pp. 104-21.

²⁷ Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review*, Vol. 50 (1943), p. 394 and pp. 370-96. See also his *Motivation and Personality* (New York, 1954).

For example, some individuals, provided they have once known physical safety, will unhesitatingly sacrifice all of it for love, or for standards of right conduct tied in with their self-esteem, etc.

In a recent volume, James C. Davies has suggested the utility of Maslow's theory as a generator of propositions regarding political behavior, and he illustrates the plausibility (without demonstrating the validity) of such propositions with a wealth of historical and contemporary political behavior data. For example, according to Davies's theorizing it is impractical to suggest, with La Palombara, that it might be "possible to manipulate demands" in economically underdeveloped countries so that widespread loyalties to democratic institutions could emerge: "Long before there can be responsible or irresponsible popular government, long before the question of dictatorship or democracy can be taken up, the problem of survival must be solved so that a political community itself can develop, so that people can direct some of their attention to politics."²⁸ In another context he says, "Propaganda cannot paint a picture which conflicts with reality as it is seen by individuals in the light of their basic needs" (p. 134); the picture can be painted all right, but it will be a wasted effort. And Davies quotes Kwame Nkrumah, whose implicit rejoinder to La Palombara's argument is hard to improve on: "We cannot tell our peoples that material benefits in growth and modern progress are not for them. If we do, they will throw us out and seek other leaders who promise more . . . We have to modernize. Either we shall do so with the interest and support of the West or we shall be compelled to turn elsewhere. This is not a warning or a threat, but a straight statement of political reality" (p. 135).

One shortcoming in Davies's as well as Maslow's work, in my judgment, is that both authors seek to relate events and behavior directly to the elusive concept of "need," without the use of an intermediate and more manageable concept such as "want." Both concepts are badly needed, and their interrelations and their application in hypotheses must be developed if we want to move toward a more adequate knowledge of political behavior. It must be granted that manifest wants are important aspects of our political reality, especially in democracies; what matters is that we also keep remembering, unlike many behavioralists, that there also are genuine needs to worry about, elusive though they may be to the

²⁸ *Human Nature in Politics* (New York, 1963), p. 28. Davies does not refer to La Palombara.

researcher's conventional tools. The volume of competing loudspeakers, if I may use a metaphor, is in a pluralist democracy perhaps more likely to depend on the power of the purse than on the urgency of the need. Even the most democratic governments are likely to come to a bad end—to say nothing of the individuals living under them—unless they learn to become at least as responsive to the basic needs of all their citizens as they are to the most insistent wants of the various articulate and influential interest groups and parties.

Most of Maslow's as well as Davies's discussion is highly speculative; only a beginning has been made. But their theory does lend itself to the production of testable hypotheses. For example, Almond's theory of political "input functions" (political socialization and recruitment; interest articulation; interest aggregation; political communication) and "output functions" (rule making; rule application; rule adjudication),²⁹ would seem to provide a fertile field for exploring what the participation in or other ego-involvement with each type of function can mean, in satisfying individual personality needs as well as wants. Moving in this direction we can perhaps get away from the customary *clichés* about the value of democracy, toward research-based knowledge on what (aspects of) democratic institutions have what kinds of value for human development.

I have argued elsewhere that the human goals of politics should be conceived in terms of maximizing individual freedom—psychological, social and potential.³⁰ Democracy and indeed every law and constitutional clause should be judged as a means to this end. A comprehensive treatment of norms of liberty with interrelationships and empirical consequences is necessary for this purpose, and so is a theory of human needs such as Maslow's, which in effect predicts that with increasing satisfaction of sustenance and security needs men's tendency will be to become less anti-social, more capable of respecting and eventually perhaps insisting on respect for the basic needs and liberties of others.

The normative research³¹ to be recommended can be done with

²⁹ Cf. his introduction to Almond and Coleman, eds., *op. cit.*

³⁰ *The Structure of Freedom* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1958, and New York, 1965).

³¹ The term "normative research" may be puzzling to some, who think of research exclusively as systematically re(peated) search for empirical data, in the real world or in contrived experimental worlds. And "research" has been one of the empirical social scientist's proud banners in his uphill fight against the sometime supremacy of armchair speculators. In our time a less parochial use of

far more precision than was attempted or achieved in the work on freedom just referred to. Perhaps philosophers working with political scientists can be expected to be active on this research frontier in future years. One good example of normative research of this kind, even though its reference to empirical data is for purposes of normative interpretation only, is Naess's study of Gandhi's ethics of conflict resolution.³²

The burden of this paper, then, is to plead for an expansion and a more systematic articulation of the psychological and the normative perspectives of political behavior research. I propose as a normative basis the proposition that politics exists for the purpose of progressively removing the most stultifying obstacles to a free human development, with priority for the worst obstacles, whether they hit many or few—in other words, with priority for those individuals who are most severely oppressed; as Harrington points out with respect to the poverty-stricken in the United States, they are also the least articulate, and the least likely to achieve redress by way of the ordinary democratic processes.³³ It is argued in this paper that the current preoccupation with pseudo-political behavior carries conservative and anti-political implications, and that the best hope for a more politically useful reorientation of behavioral research—in addition to and beyond the comparative politics perspective—is to study how the various functions of government bear, and could bear, on the satisfaction of basic needs as well as conscious wants.

Among the questions to ask are these: What kinds of enduring satisfactions tend to be associated, for example, with particular participant and subject roles established by alternate forms of centralized or decentralized decision processes? Under what socio-cultural and socio-economic circumstances are majoritarian decision processes, of given types, likely to produce substantive satisfaction of the basic needs of, in Harrington's phrase, society's "rejects"?

"research" is called for, as a way of recognizing the close interplay between the empirical, normative and logical aspects of inquiry that, as the present paper argues, is necessary for the further development of our knowledge of political as of other human behavior.

³² Arne Naess, "A systematization of Gandhian ethics of conflict resolution," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 2 (1958), pp. 140-55; and also Johan Galtung and Arne Naess, *Gandhis politiske etikk* (Oslo, Tanum, 1955).

³³ Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1963; New York, 1962).

As so often in our human condition, the dimensions of our ignorance appear to grow larger the closer we come to the most enduringly important issues of our social life. Much conceptual as well as basic psychological work remains to be done before our technical proficiency in the study of the relation of political forms to basic needs and to liberty can come to match the current work on analysis of voting patterns. But in this work political scientists should participate; our stakes in its progress are as high as anyone else's.

One particular type of research that should be pushed, as a much needed complement to the large supply of data on pseudopolitical behavior, is work that would focus on just how some citizens "graduate" from the role of pseudopolitical actor to that of political actor. Or, more accurately—for surely there are more pseudopolitical actors in the older age groups, "hardened in the school of life"—how it is that some categories of individuals (or individuals in some categories of situations) manage to remain concerned with ideals and with politics, *i.e.*, with the welfare of their fellow men, all their lives.

A theory of human development is implied in the research approaches here recommended. It asserts that man is likely to become increasingly capable of being rational, or intellectual⁸⁴ to the extent that he no longer needs the services of his beliefs and attitudes for the purpose of keeping his various anxieties in check. Deep-seated neurotic anxieties about one's worth as a human being predispose to right-wing or occasionally leftwing extremism, with glorification of ingroups or individuals, living or dead, along with hatreds against outgroups and deviants. Neurotic status anxieties predispose to eager adherence to whatever views appear expected in one's reference groups. Realistic fears about employment or future career prospects predispose against maintaining the luxury of political opinions at all, unless they are "safe." Only for individuals whose main anxiety problems have been faced and in some way resolved is it generally possible to think of and care about problems of politics in terms of standards of justice or the public interest, independently of personal worries.

The development of strictly political incentives in the individual, then, depends on a gradual process of liberation from a preoccupation with personal anxieties and worries. Stages in this process can be

⁸⁴ Cf. my "A Social Theory of Intellectual Development," in Nevitt Sanford, ed., *The American College* (New York, 1961), pp. 972-1005, esp. pp. 978 and 1000-1005.

identified by research, although our concepts and instruments need some improvement before we can with confidence relate specific categories of political irrationality to (repressed or acknowledged) anxieties associated with specific levels in a hierarchy of human needs. Human nature being complex, so is the task of fully comprehending the dynamics of political behavior. My essential argument here is that we must face up to but not complacently accept, as the pseudopolitical outlook does, the fact that most of our citizens live too harassed lives or lack the education or opportunities for reflection to permit them the real satisfactions and the full dignity of democratic citizenship. We must pose the empirical problem of how the more stultifying pressures on adults and pre-adults can be reduced. A premature ruling out of the classic democratic citizenship ideal, with its stress on reason as a crucial factor in politics, would seem particularly inappropriate in our age of rapid technological change; never was the need for politics in the strict sense greater.

It is conceivable that our prospects for developing much larger proportions of political-minded citizens will improve substantially if or when the "cybernetics revolution" does away with our omnipresent worries about making a living.³⁵ On the other hand, unless educational and cultural resources can be expanded as rapidly, so that more people may be enabled to base their sense of identity and self-esteem on their own attributes or ideals rather than on their occupational roles, status anxieties and despair about lack of purpose in life might remain at present levels, and become aggravated for some. But the over-all prospects surely would be brighter, to the extent that more of the principal *real* worries on which our current anxieties feed were removed.

³⁵ W. H. Ferry and twenty-five associates have recently issued a statement that received front-page attention in *The New York Times* and other newspapers, under the title "The Triple Revolution: An Appraisal of the Major U. S. Crises and Proposals for Action" (Washington: Maurer, Fleischer, Zon and Associates, 1120 Connecticut Ave., 1964). Referring to the revolutions in cybernetics, in weaponry, and in human rights, but particularly to the first of the three, Ferry *et al.* argue that there "is an urgent need for a fundamental change in the mechanisms employed to insure consumer rights" (p. 9), now that the problem of production has been solved and the problem of full employment has become impossible to solve with our present system. "We urge, therefore, that society, through its appropriate legal and governmental institutions, undertake an unqualified commitment to provide every individual and every family with an adequate income as a matter of right. This undertaking we consider to be essential to the emerging economic, social, and political order in this country" (p. 16).

In any event, let us not as political scientists rule out the possibility that a real *polity* may emerge eventually—a community of people capable of giving some of their energies to political as distinct from pseudopolitical reflection and activity. A less utopian first step that may be hoped for is that many more political scientists will adopt a more political (or a less pseudopolitical) perspective in their theorizing and research. As the horizons of behavior research expand to encompass latent need-behavior as well as manifest want-behavior, our political science will not only produce a new order of intellectual challenge; it may also become a potent instrument for promoting political development in the service of human development.

K. W. Kim

The Limits of Behavioural Explanation in Politics

I

The unique contribution of American scholarship to the study of politics is undoubtedly the development of behaviouralism. As "a successful protest"¹ against the limits of traditional political science, the behavioural approach has certainly broadened our perspective by calling attention to hitherto neglected areas of political research. It has also made us methodologically more sophisticated by its insistence on rigorous empiricism and on theory-building as a major task. And yet it is difficult to be convinced that "all segments of political science can be treated behaviourally,"² as one student has recently claimed. Behaviouralism is certainly an effective way of studying politics. But it is quite a different thing to say that there exists no aspect of politics which cannot be treated behaviourally. It is the aim of this paper to enquire whether there may not exist segments of politics which by their very nature resist the behavioural treatment.

Let us first define what is to be understood by behaviouralism. In

¹ Robert A. Dahl, "The Behavioral Approach in Political Science: Epitaph for a Monument to a Successful Protest," *American Political Science Review*, LV (1961).

² Heinz Eulau, "Segments of Political Science Most Susceptible to Behavioristic Treatment," in *The Limits of Behavioralism in Political Science*, James C. Charlesworth, ed. (Philadelphia, 1962), 17. Hereafter referred to as *The Limits*.

SOURCE: *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, XXXI, 3 (August, 1965), 315-27. Reprinted with permission.

K. W. Kim is assistant professor of government and international relations at New York University.

view of its inherent "ambiguity,"³ it may be best to start by listing three major assertions which I think set apart behavioural explanations from other kinds of statements in political studies.⁴ These assertions are: (1) individuals rather than groups constitute proper units for analyses; (2) facts must be separated from values; and (3) legitimate explanations always run in terms of laws or generalizations, but never in terms of descriptive statements of particular occurrences.

The first view was put forward by George Catlin as early as 1927, when he maintained that "the subject matter of politics is the acts of individuals, not of states."⁵ Lasswell and Kaplan, in their now famous exercise in political theory, amplified Catlin's statement by defining "the group act" as "a pattern of individual acts." This is presumably because "an act is always that of a single person," which means that, "when we speak of 'group acts', a pattern formed by individual acts is to be understood."⁶ In the language of contemporary philosophy, this emphasis on individuals and their acts as units of analysis has been called "methodological individualism" as against "holism." The latter principle asserts that societal facts cannot be properly reduced to psychological facts and that whatever macroscopic laws one may discover in sociology are *sui generis*, applying to entities larger than individuals. By contrast, proponents of methodological individualism maintain that social processes and events should be explained by being deduced, in principle at least, from statements describing the behaviour of participating individuals.⁷ Behaviouralism in political science thus seems to be a political ap-

³ Dahl, "The Behavioral Approach," 766.

⁴ David Easton's definition of political behaviouralism as "a science of politics modelled after the methodological assumptions of the natural sciences" would make sense only if the term "science" had a "definite and unambiguous application," which is not the case. For the latter view, see Max Black, *Problems of Analysis: Philosophical Essays* (Ithaca, NY, 1954), 5. For David Easton's definition, see "The Current Meaning of Behavioralism in Political Science," in *The Limits*, 9.

⁵ George E. G. Catlin, *Science and Methods of Politics* (New York, 1927), 141-2, cited by Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, *Power and Society: A Framework for Political Inquiry* (New Haven, 1957), 3. See also Dahl, "The Behavioral Approach," 766. Curiously, David Easton's "tolerably accurate and reasonably exhaustive account" of the assumptions and objectives of "this movement" says nothing about individuals being units of analysis. "The Current Meaning," 7.

⁶ Lasswell and Kaplan, *Power and Society*, 3.

⁷ For an holistic argument, see Maurice Mandelbaum, "Societal Facts," *British Journal of Sociology* (1955), reprinted in *Theories of History*, Patrick Gardiner, ed. (Glencoe, Ill., 1959), 476-88. For the opposing view, see J. W. N.

plication of a much broader principle in the social sciences which denies the ontological reality of social entities larger than (physically identifiable) individual persons. This, however, may be too strong a statement. Most of the political behaviouralists may not have thought out the logical implications of their adoption of individuals as the only legitimate units of analysis. If political behaviouralism is unambiguously committed to the kind of methodological individualism suggested above, what happens, for instance, to the status of the group in the so-called interest group theories? Logically speaking, there is no reason to suppose that groups have any more reality than "the society as a whole."⁸ In the end both concepts are reducible to a set of psychological observations about individuals and their acts. It is, however, doubtful whether the students of politics are prepared to endorse such a thorough-going psychological reductionism. Short of this methodological principle, it seems best to assume that the behavioural emphasis on individuals is merely a recommendation of a particular strategy in political research. Consequently this aspect of the behavioural method will not be made a chief concern in this essay.

The second assertion characteristic of the behavioural school is that, as David Easton put it, "ethical evaluation and empirical explanation . . . should be kept analytically distinct."⁹ Clearly normative statements cannot be verified in the same way that empirical propositions are supposed to be. In a sense, evaluative statements tell us more about those who make them than about anything else. It is thus quite understandable that the behavioural school, a consciously "scientific" movement, should decide to free political science from normative judgments. It is, however, very curious to note that no political behaviouralist has put into print a more extended argument on the issue than was already available. Even some of the questions which had been raised by Max Weber, who spoke of "pseudo-ethical neutrality," to name just one instance, have not received any rigorous treatment from the behavioural

Watkins, "Ideal Types and Historical Explanations," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* (1952), reprinted in *Readings in the Philosophy of Science*, Herbert Feigl and May Brodbeck, eds. (New York, 1953), 723-43.

⁸David Truman seems to think that they ~~do~~ have more reality about them. *The Governmental Process* (New York, 1960), 14-44.

⁹"The Current Meaning," 8. Whether this statement itself is an instance of evaluation or explanation is an intriguing question. See also Interuniversity Summer Seminar on Political Behavior, Social Science Research Council, "Research in Political Behavior," *American Political Science Review*, 44 (1952), 1003.

scholars.¹⁰ The critics of behaviouralism, on the other hand, seem to have concentrated almost exclusively on the issue or issues connected with the doctrine of ethical neutrality.¹¹ The result is clearly disappointing. If the critical scholars have either belaboured the obvious or insisted on the barren, the behaviouralists have urged some equally trivial points, when they have not been silent. The controversy will not be pursued here.

Lastly, the behavioural school may be identified with the notion that "there are discoverable uniformities in political behavior," which "can be expressed in generalizations or theories with explanatory and predictive value."¹² I shall call this notion the "regularity principle," since what it maintains is that certain kinds of events are regularly accompanied by certain other kinds of events.¹³ It is with the regularity principle that the rest of the paper will be concerned.

II

To avoid unnecessary confusion, it is best to start by defining unambiguously what is meant by the regularity principle. According to Karl Popper, who claims to have been the first to formulate the principle (which he calls "the theory of causality"): "To give *causal explanation* of a certain event means to derive deductively a statement . . . which describes that event, using as premises of the deduction some universal laws together with certain singular or specific sentences which we may

¹⁰ "The Meaning of 'Ethical Neutrality' in Sociology and Economics," in *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch, trans. and ed. (Glencoe, Ill., 1949), 6.

¹¹ See, for example, Walter Berns, "The Behavioral Sciences and the Study of Political Things," *American Political Science Review*, 55 (1961); Russell Kirk, "Segments of Political Science Not Amenable to Behavioristic Treatment," and Mulford Q. Sibley, "The Limitations of Behavioralism," both in *The Limits*, 49-67, 68-93.

¹² Easton, "The Current Meaning," 7. See also Interuniversity Summer Seminar, "Research in Political Behavior," 1003.

¹³ Using the term, "events," may raise a problem, since some behaviouralists maintain that the behavioural approach to politics "specifies the unit or object of both theoretical and empirical analysis as the behavior of persons and social groups rather than events." See the Introduction to *Political Behavior: A Reader in Theory and Research*, Heinz Eulau *et al.*, eds. (Glencoe, Ill., 1956). On the other hand, Lasswell and Kaplan state that "the subject matter of political science" is to be formulated "in terms of a certain class of events rather than timeless institutions or political patterns." *Power and Society*, xiv. For the present analysis, the concept of an event will be broadly understood embracing what may be called its macro as well as micro connotations.

call *initial conditions*." As a consequence "the use of a theory for the purpose of *predicting* some specific event is just another aspect of its use for the purpose of *explaining* such an event."¹⁴ This is, I believe, what David Easton had in mind when he spoke of "generalizations with explanatory and predictive value." Thus he calls for "an effort to develop generalizations about political behaviour, i.e. to advance hypotheses about the relationships, to discover uniformities or regularities or laws."¹⁵ What the regularity principle of behaviouralism demands is then the discovery of "laws" in politics in order that one may explain a particular event by deducing a statement about its actual occurrence from a set of relevant laws plus another set of statements describing certain events which are to be regarded as the determining conditions for the event to be explained. Consider, for example, the task of explaining the fact that British political parties are more class-oriented than American political parties. If we had a verified law that "the more rigid the stratification of the society, the more likely it is that class-oriented parties will emerge,"¹⁶ we could deduce the appropriate explanation from the combination of the above law with the empirical observation that British society is indeed more rigidly stratified than American society.

The crucial question is obviously: what is a "law"? Assuming that behaviouralism insists on the unity of human knowledge, I shall depend on Carl Hempel's definition, which was first put forward in his now classical essay, "The Function of General Laws in History."¹⁷ Hempel, who is one of the most uncompromising proponents of the regularity principle, defined a law as a "statement of universal conditional form which is capable of being confirmed or disconfirmed by suitable empirical findings."¹⁸ Later, in his more ambitious article, Hempel dropped

¹⁴ Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society And Its Enemies* (Princeton, 1955), 445-6. Carl G. Hempel makes a distinction between causal explanation and statistical explanation, which are said to be both instances of a larger category, called "nomological explanation." Since social sciences depend mostly on statistical generalizations, I shall treat both causal and statistical explanations as logically equivalent propositions. For Hempel's view, see "The Logic of Functional Analysis," in *Symposium on Sociological Theory*, Llewellyn Gross, ed. (New York, 1959), 275-6.

¹⁵ Vernon Van Dyke, *Political Science: A Philosophical Analysis* (Stanford, Calif., 1960), 159.

¹⁶ Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steiner, *Human Behavior: An Inventory of Scientific Findings* (New York, 1964), 417.

¹⁷ First published in *Journal of Philosophy* (1942), reprinted in Patrick Gardiner, ed., *Theories of History* (Glencoe, Ill., 1960), 344-56.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 345.

the requirement for the conditional form, arguing that every conditional statement can be decomposed into a set of non-conditional statements; he then amplified the meaning of the universal form by stating that a sentence is to be regarded as a law only if its predicate is purely universal or "purely qualitative in character," i.e., only "if a statement of its meaning does not require reference to any one particular object or spatio-temporal location."¹⁹ Thus concepts like "soft," "as long as," and "electrically charged" are permissible predicates of general laws, whereas expressions like "taller than the Eiffel Tower," "medieval," and "Ming" are not. To apply Hempel's formulation to those words frequently used in political science, terms such as "influential," "authoritative," and "legally elected" are "purely qualitative in character," whereas expressions like "Western," "more powerful than the Soviet Union," and "modern" clearly require some reference to particular objects or spatio-temporal location. The problem of behavioural explanation in politics is, at least in one important respect, that of freeing political theory from proper nouns and other expressions dependent upon them. If we can discover a sufficient number of laws in the subject matter of political science to be able to explain most particular occurrences which interest us, behaviouralism will have succeeded.

This is, of course, why the behavioural enterprise is so immensely attractive. At last the study of politics seems to have arrived at the point where impressionistic generalizations and essentially camouflaged ideologies will be replaced by rigorous theories and unambiguously formulated "laws" of politics. That such a prospect is most exhilarating to contemplate is difficult to deny. What is equally difficult, if not more so, is to be convinced that it is possible to subsume all politics under a set of laws. Although there are undoubtedly some aspects of politics which can be generalized into laws, to claim that the behavioural approach is applicable to all aspects of politics is certainly to be blind to some very serious obstacles to such an approach. Three such obstacles are: (1) "unique" events, namely events which interest us primarily by virtue of their unique character, (2) what I shall call non-events, and (3) questions which can be answered by uncovering "reasons" rather than "causes." Each will be closely examined.

¹⁹ Carl G. Hempel and Paul Oppenheim, "The Logic of Explanation," *Philosophy of Science*, 15 (1948), reprinted in *Readings in the Philosophy of Science*, part III, Logical Analysis of Law and Explanation, 337-50.

JA84

US 1137

Patent Office

for insertion in 139

III

The first obstacle to behaviouralism is the problem presented by "unique" events. Arguments supporting the idea of unique events are frequently based on the trivial sense of the word in which every event, physical or mental, can be said to be unique, namely unrepeatable in the absolute sense.²⁰ This is, however, not the sense in which I wish to exclude certain unique events from the proper domain of behavioural explanation. When it is maintained that some political events are unique, what is meant is simply that such events are of interest to us mainly because of their peculiar characteristics. It is far from my intention to argue either that all events are unique or that there are events "so unique" as to permit no general concepts in describing them.²¹ After all, the Russian Revolution is a revolution.

It is, however, of the utmost importance to realize that the particular combination of general properties known as the Russian Revolution is virtually impossible to subsume adequately under a general law. Generalizations about revolutions without the use of terms which are spatio-temporally limiting are bound to be quite inadequate in explaining any particular revolution which is historically significant. This, of course, does not imply that there are no significant generalizations to be made about revolutions.²² It is rather that any particular revolution is unlikely to be described sufficiently by available generalizations. Consider, for instance, the role of Lenin in the Russian Revolution. This

²⁰ Thus, Hempel and Oppenheim are perfectly understandable when they argue that the uniqueness argument "involves a misunderstanding of the logical character of causal explanation. Every individual event, in the physical sciences no less than in psychology or the social sciences, is unique in the sense that it, with all its peculiar characteristics, does not repeat itself." *Ibid.*, 326. An example of this kind of misunderstanding may be found in David G. Smith's apparently unqualified acceptance of Windelband's distinction between "nomothetic" and "ideographic" sciences. See "Political Science and Political Theory," *American Political Science Review*, 51 (1957), 737.

²¹ It is plain that my position here is not open to such criticism as made by Karl W. Deutsch, who tried to dispose of the uniqueness argument by stating that "no knowable object can be completely unique." This sort of objection is as trivial as the position it attacks. See *The Nerves of Government: Models of Political Communication and Control* (New York, 1963), 14.

²² Crane Brinton, for example, was quite successful in making some meaningful generalizations. See *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York, 1952), sec. II, "Some Tentative Uniformities" of chap. 9.

role was so crucial that any explanation of the Russian Revolution would be incomplete without an adequate account of "the directing leadership of Lenin."²³ Yet it is surely obvious that any attempt to take account of Lenin's leadership will inevitably involve terms and expressions that one would hesitate to classify as "purely qualitative." To abstract only general qualities from Lenin's personality and his role in the revolutionary event would be a thankless task indeed. It would be an impossible task if one were to try to employ only those abstract, general qualities, now expressed through spatio-temporally non-limiting symbols, in conjunction with all the other universally applicable predicates about the Russian Revolution. Any sensible person would see that such large and complex events are better handled by a language that still uses proper nouns, i.e., names of persons, places, and dates.

To show what is likely to happen if one tries to formulate a law general enough to cover all revolutions, consider a generalization which is universal only at the expense of its meaning. The statement in question is this: "Multiple dysfunctions plus elite intransigence cause revolution."²⁴ In form this is undoubtedly universal, for it does not require any reference to a particular object in space and time. Not all universal statements are, however, meaningful. Purely analytic statements are universal and empirically empty. If the concept of "multiple dysfunctions" requires reference to the concept of "revolution," it follows that the above law-like statement is in effect tautological.²⁵ In other words, if the definition of "multiple dysfunctions" is such as to make the occurrence of "revolution" a necessity, and also if there is no way of identifying phenomena covered by the concept of "multiple dysfunctions" short of a revolution's having actually taken place, the universal character of the statement in question only insures the universal meaninglessness of its content. How, then, is the concept of "multiple dysfunction" defined? "Dysfunction," according to the author of the statement in question, is

²³ Sidney Hook has demonstrated very convincingly that the Russian Revolution "was triumphant because of the directing leadership of Lenin and that without him it would have been lost." *The Hero in History* (Boston, 1960), chap. x, 184-228.

²⁴ Chalmers A. Johnson, "Revolution and the Social System," a paper delivered at the 59th Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, 9. It needs to be pointed out that my comments here do not constitute a criticism of Johnson's paper as a whole.

²⁵ The tautological character of the statement will not be affected by the "elite intransigence" part of the statement, since the latter can have meaning only in conjunction with "multiple dysfunctions."

"the condition that demands the response of social change."²⁶ "Multiple dysfunction" seems to imply that amount of dysfunction ("a level of dysfunctional conditions") "below which revolution is not appropriate. . . ." ²⁷ It is, however, said to be impossible at the present time to measure "amounts" of dysfunctions in a system. We can only observe that "various dysfunction-inducing phenomena are affecting a social system." But, as the author himself admits, "the only way we know that these dysfunction-inducing systems cause the revolution is because the revolution has occurred."²⁸ Clearly we have come full circle. Originally intending to explain revolution by discovering its determining conditions, the author of the law-like statement ended up by explaining the determining conditions of the revolution only by referring to what he initially set out to explain. The result is a tautological statement the only virtue of which is its universal form.

Most behavioural propositions are, of course, less purely universal. They tend to be generalizations within a national framework. Thus we have observations about American parties and British elections. Unlike the natural scientist who speaks of neutrons and positrons, not American neutrons and British positrons, the political behaviouralist, despite his claim to be a scientist, tends to offer mostly what Professor Beer has recently called "relative explanations," namely explanatory statements which are "not universal in form but . . . relative to a certain context or contexts."²⁹ The question which naturally arises then is whether such contextually limited generalizations can serve the purpose of explaining adequately what have been designated as unique events.

In other words, it seems reasonable to think that if some events are better explained by contextually limited generalizations than by purely universal propositions, then certain other events may be still better

²⁶ Johnson, "Revolution and the Social System," 2.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3. ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁹ Samuel H. Beer, "Causal Explanation and Imaginative Re-enactment," *History and Theory*, III, no. 1 (1963), 9. Prof. Beer cites V. O. Key's *American Democracy and Public Opinion* as an example of a successful attempt in terms of "relative explanations." Joseph LaPalombara made the same kind of point in "The Utility and Limitations of Interest Group Theory in Non-American Field Situations," *Journal of Politics*, 22 (1960), reprinted in Harry Eckstein and David E. Apter, eds., *Comparative Politics, A Reader* (New York, 1963), 421-30. See also Richard Snyder's plea for "concepts and theories which are *situationally referred*" (italics in the original). "Some Recent Trends in International Relations Theory and Research," in A. Ranney, ed., *Essays on the Behavioral Study of Politics* (Urbana, New York, 1962), 129.

handled by statements which are so limited as to make it pointless to call them generalizations at all. The fact is that practically unrepeatable combinations of rich and complex qualities, combinations which we have called unique, require so many contextual limitations of appropriate general statements that by the time one had collected a sufficient number of limited and universal generalizations for the purpose of explaining the particular event in question, the collected set of general statements would certainly contain many propositions which would be relevant for no more than one particular instance. This being so, no sensible person can dispute the economy and elegance of the method that seeks to explain something without attempting to convert every proper noun into so many qualitative predicates as a prerequisite of scholarly work. It serves no useful purpose to decompose a simple and clearly understandable phrase like "the directing leadership of Lenin" into a series of formally universal expressions, *A*, *B*, *C*, . . . *N*, assuming that the combination of these generalizable qualities would be equivalent to our initial expression. What makes this type of operation uneconomical and pointless is that, if the qualities *A* to *N* are comprehensive enough to describe adequately what we would normally subsume under the proper noun, Lenin, it is inconceivable that we would ever come upon another person with the same qualities who found himself in a practically similar situation to Lenin's. For the purpose of understanding the Russian Revolution, the retention of the name, Lenin, not only facilitates communication; it also enriches our understanding by evoking those *n* + qualities that would inevitably be lost if a finite list of general qualities were formulated. It would be disastrous, in my view, if political scientists limited themselves by the regularity principle; many of the occurrences that interest political scientists are interesting precisely because they are unique. Such events can be comprehended in their unique dimensions only through an approach in particular, local, and limited, rather than exclusively behavioural, terms.

IV

The second class of events that constitutes an obstacle to the behavioural approach comprises what, for the lack of a better expression, I shall call non-events. Here I have in mind not actual occurrences but rather the opposite, namely what did not happen. Such non-events concern us in three ways. In the first place, we have examples of successful

attempts to explain actual occurrences by making reference to what did not occur.³⁰ Secondly, we may wish to account for the failure of certain conceivable events actually to take place.³¹ Finally, at the risk of sounding a bit Hegelian, I shall argue that there is a sense in which our understanding of something can be said to be more complete only when coupled with our imagination of something else.³² Each of these three uses of non-events calls for closer analysis.

The first use of non-events arises out of the need to posit what did not happen in order to explain what did. Admittedly there is no use in pretending that all such negative factors which one may find it necessary to posit will always defy the use of appropriate general laws. It seems, however, equally foolish to assume that all such negative factors will necessarily fall within the legitimate claim of the regularity principle. Some such negative factors are bound to demand the use of limiting terms descriptive of unique occurrences; one then has to rely on his power of imagination,³³ for in a sense he is dealing with unprecedented occurrences. Only if an event *X* has been repeatedly shown to be followed by an event *Y* is it possible to explain the non-occurrence of the latter by the non-occurrence of the former. When what one wishes to explain is not the non-occurrence of *X* but rather the actual existence of *Z*, and if *Y* requires some reference to concrete, spatio-temporally limited objects in its description, it is clear that adherence to the regularity principle will entail only a waste of time and energy. What makes the behavioural approach even more misplaced here is that the event *Y*, the non-occurrence of which is called upon to shed light on the

³⁰ See, for example, Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (New York, 1955).

³¹ Max Weber insisted that every historical work worthy of publication should contain "judgments of possibilities." "The Logic of the Cultural Sciences," in *Methodology of the Social Sciences*, 173: It must be pointed out that Weber considered the category of possibility within the framework of "a positive knowledge of the 'laws' of events" (p. 174). This point will be considered later.

³² Herbert Marcuse advocates "the revival . . . of negative thinking" which he associates correctly with Hegel. *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (Boston, 1961). See the preface, "A Note on Dialectic." My aim is less ambitious as will become clear.

³³ John Stuart Mill, who was the first to give a rigorous formulation of inductive logic, gave also one of the most persuasive definitions of "imagination," when he defined it as "that which enables us by a voluntary effort, to conceive the absent as if it were present, the imaginary as if it were real. . . ." See "Bentham" in *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill, Ethical, Political and Religious*, Marshall Cohen, ed. (The Modern Library, 1960), 174.

or
ca
ha
in
er
ar
ev

ra
th
iti
N
qu
ar
as
co
ab
ar
M
co
ap
by
he
ba
tio

co
to
ne
ex
en
fai
Ch
po
mi
tiv
inr

reg
(Ei

occurrence of Z, may actually have no precedent whatever. It could conceivably be a combination of several factors, each of which may have occurred separately before but without a record of having existed in the combined form. Suffice it to say then that the difficulties encountered in dealing with what I have called practically unique events are compounded by the need to rely on our imaginative power, for the events in question may be negative as well as practically unique.

In the case of non-events as direct objects of interest and inquiry, rather than as explanatory data for some other objects to be explained, the main difficulty seems to lie in the necessity of considering possibilities which are not automatically suggested by actual events themselves. No general law of any kind will ever suggest by itself that we ask such questions as "why is there no harmony among nations?" Such questions are raised as a result of a certain idealism which posits negative events as legitimate objects of intellectual concern.³⁴ The regularity principle could help us only in cases where negative events are clearly recognizable exceptions to repeatedly confirmed regularities. But that such cases are rare among common objects of intellectual curiosity is obvious. Most of the questions we wish to raise with regard to non-existent conditions and actions, desired but not materialized, fall outside of those apparent exceptions to the general laws. It might, of course, be argued by the behaviouralist that, although idealism may be a highly efficacious heuristic device, explanations are still dependent upon generalizations based on positive events. Consider, for instance, the question of international conflicts. The behaviouralist might say that any attempt to account for the absence of harmony among nations is in effect an attempt to explain the determining conditions of existing conflicts. What is neglected in such an argument, however, is that an account of the existing conflicts is only a preliminary step toward an imaginative enquiry into possible characteristics of a harmony which has so far failed to obtain. By the same token, a question about US failure in China can be answered meaningfully only by assuming that success was possible and then examining possible conditions and actions which might have led to the success that did not occur. Without such imaginative probing no questions of policy can be dealt with in the spirit of innovation and creativity. A complete commitment to the regularity prin-

³⁴ Stanley Hoffmann advocates a search for "relevant utopias," which I would regard as "non-events." See *Contemporary Theory in International Relations* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1960), 174.

ciple as the sole method of political enquiry is surely bound to impoverish our political imagination and consequently to diminish our ability to cope with practical problems of political life.

This brings us to the last point to be made about the uses of non-events. The crucial issue to be considered is whether or not the sort of political imagination that I suggested above can help us in understanding politics. My central argument will be that, practically speaking, we do actually come to a better understanding of political things by being concerned with something other than that with which we are immediately concerned. An understanding of the American political system is richer and more complete when accompanied by a knowledge of the political system of, say, the Soviet Union. By the same token, an understanding of both systems will greatly benefit from a conception of a political system which is neither American nor Russian. If we may, for analytic purposes, assume that these two are the only political systems in existence, would not the third be merely a hypothetical system? In other words, is there not a sense in which we can argue that Aristotle understood Athenian democracy more adequately than would have been the case had he lacked a conception of other political regimes, including the best conceivable one?

Undoubtedly numerous difficulties will be encountered if the proposal for a critical method of the above kind is consciously adopted. In addition to dealing with facts, we would also have to involve ourselves in the construction of hypothetical models. Such a procedure is also sure to raise the uncomfortable question about the normative implications of ideal models which are proposed here as useful devices in the comparative study of politics. These difficulties are, however, trivial when considered in the over-all perspective. What is important to realize is the fact that even when we have successfully formulated general laws on the basis of positive events, we will still have a long road to travel before we can claim to understand politics. Even putting aside the point about the dependence of the behavioural operation on the heuristic role of idealism, we are compelled to push our enquiry beyond the horizon of positivism in order to understand better the structure of positive politics by comparing it with ideal politics.

V

Finally, in addition to unique and negative events, we come to the class of events with regard to which our quest is more for "reasons"

th
ra
th
re
fo
as
sc
ex
m
ur
ac
th
ca
ity
of
sa
its
th

lat
sta
wh
wi
so
en
en
of
pr
be
its

ca
un
fre
rai

Fi
So
tio
(O

than "causes." In such cases, what I shall call "rational" explanation—rational in the sense of connecting what is to be explained to the reasons the actor or actors must have had for doing what was done—ought to be recognized as clearly superior to the behavioural explanation, for the former does what the latter cannot. This, of course, is far from saying, as philosophers of "empathy" tend to say, that the methods of natural science have no place in political studies. General laws and "relative explanations" do certainly have an important role to play. All that is maintained is that there are certain events in politics which we feel we understand only when we have succeeded in uncovering the reasons the actors had for doing the things they did.³⁵ It is, of course, conceivable that even such events may be covered by generalizations in terms of causes. The only advantage of doing so, however, would be the possibility of prediction on the basis of such generalizations. Measured in terms of the goal of understanding and not prediction, it is not warranted to say that one understands a certain action better because one has located its presumably determining conditions rather than the reasons behind the action in question.

Our ordinary use of the word, "understand," tends to support the latter procedure rather than the former. To say that "I do not understand him" has the implication that "I do not understand his reasons for what he did." In searching for an explanation of a particular action, we wish to be assured that the reasons which led the agent to that action are somehow reasonable, i.e., understandable in terms of our own experiences. (Here imagination should be included in the notion of experience.) To recognize this ordinary meaning of the word "understand" is, of course, to realize at once the element of appraisal involved in the process called understanding. The demand that a certain action should be understandable is really another side of the urge to pass judgment on its appropriateness and wisdom.

We need not, however, elevate these comments into absolute ethical standards. All that is required is that one should at least try to understand a particular action by looking for "reasons" within the framework of his own experience. Critical questions will be undoubtedly raised about the meaning of "the framework of one's own experience."

³⁵ For the line of reasoning here, I am heavily indebted to Anatol Rapoport, *Fights, Games, and Debates* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1960), sec. v, Critique of Social Physics, of part I, 85–103. For the philosophical formulation of the position taken in this essay, see William Dray, *Laws and Explanation in History* (Oxford, 1957), chap. v, 118–55.

Short of a full-scale philosophical analysis, suffice it to say that we do actually employ such a framework in many areas of our discipline. That foreign policies of Metternich or farm policies of Khrushchev are made more or less understandable to us is proof enough of the fact that we have somehow succeeded in explaining some political actions by uncovering appropriate and intelligible reasons. A safeguard against misuse of the concept of "rational explanation" is provided by the well-established requirement for various supporting evidence, as historians have known for a long time. One does not simply impute reasons to an agent, however plausible they may sound. Documentary and other evidence must be produced in support of any explanation that is formulated in terms of "reasons" rather than "causes."

The crucial issue is really normative in character, for it is obvious that it makes sense to relate a particular action to the reasons behind it. What is not so obvious is that such a procedure produces any "explanation." The behaviouralist, committed to the regularity principle, may argue that "rational explanation" is inferior compared to causal explanation because it does not enable us to make predictions. There is, however, a logical fallacy here. Even if it is true that behaviourally formulated theories enable us to make predictions in contrast to explanations in terms of reasons which do not, there exists no logical ground for supposing that the ability to make predictions is in any way a mark of a better understanding. Besides the common observation that successful predictions are quite frequently made without adequate theoretical knowledge, it should be further noted that to regard the ability to make predictions as characteristic of a better explanation is really to commit one error for which no behaviouralist would wish to be held responsible, namely, to make a jump from fact to value. The fact that behavioural propositions have predictive force can in no way confer additional explanatory value upon them.

Where only the criteria of truth are concerned, the logical thing to say would be that rational and causal explanations are answers to two different kinds of questions. What, then, are the sorts of questions which demand answers in terms of reasons rather than causes? Quite obviously, questions which concern individual actions cannot be fully answered by referring exclusively to the regularity with which such actions occur. To be sure, it may be quite true that Mr. Smith participates in politics more actively than Mrs. Jones because, as one of the behavioural findings puts it, "men are more active politically than

wo
Mi
a
Sm
pro
of
thi
ask
ex
the
diff
for
sor
into
tru
cul
or
cul
wit
rea
cor
life

Im
cla
of
no
poi
late
beg
the
wit
bel
me
anc

women."³⁶ But anyone who is seriously concerned with the question of Mr. Smith's political participation is likely to demand an explanation of a different sort. He will most probably demand some account of Mr. Smith's reasons for engaging himself in political activities. When the problem is to make some sense out of Chamberlain's action at Munich of 1938, for instance, there can be little doubt that the most sensible thing to do is to look carefully into the reasons behind the action. To ask what always causes a Chamberlain at a Munich of 1938 to do exactly the sort of thing which the actual Chamberlain did there and then would not only be unproductive; it would also constitute an entirely different kind of question from the one we wish to answer when we look for reasons. Unless one is ideologically committed to scientism of some sort, it is only natural that one should be curious about the particular intentions of a political actor in a definite situation and I maintain that truthful and meaningful statements can be made to satisfy such natural curiosity. To insist that only universally recurrent events are interesting or knowable betrays a certain doctrinaire attitude. After all, man's curiosity about other men is ordinarily about their intentions, and without such curiosity there would be no political science. It is for this reason that one important segment of political science will always be concerned with the reasons behind the actions of people in political life.

VI

Essentially, the aim of this paper has been to plead for moderation. Implicitly, however, I hope to have offered a council of boldness. By clarifying the limits of behaviouralism in political studies, the arguments of the paper should have made it plain that students of politics are under no obligation to restrict themselves to statements which can be supported by statistical regularities. If law-like propositions can be formulated and empirically confirmed, there is a place for them. It is when one begins to feel the oppressive weight of the regularity principle—because there is an element of compulsiveness in the idea of regularity, to begin with—that it becomes imperative to restore the legitimacy of non-behavioural methods which are only suggested in this paper. Such methods, to list them simply, are: history, to deal with unique or rare and complex occurrences; philosophy, in its normative and critical

³⁶ Berelson and Steiner, *Human Behavior*, 424.

sense; and phenomenology of political experiences, in the hope of elucidating more clearly than has been possible so far the inside structure of political experience rather than the outside patterns of political behaviour.³⁷ Needless to say, it is beyond the scope of this essay to offer more detailed comments on these non-behavioural methods. My aim will have been achieved if the arguments presented have helped to free our political imagination from the restrictions which would be imposed upon it by behaviouralism conceived as the only legitimate method of political enquiry.

³⁷ Richard Snyder calls his analytic scheme a "general phenomenological approach." Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, Burton Spain, *Foreign Policy Decision-Making, An Approach to the Study of International Politics* (Glencoe, Ill., 1962), 100. It is never made clear in what sense Snyder understands "phenomenological approach."

St
M

It i
ma
tha
Unl
of t
bro
nuc
the
pre
nar
any

sha
mos
plar
the
fail
at h
nuc

exci

polit

Joseph E. Schwartz

Strategic Thought: Methodology and Reality

I

It is the aim of the political scientist qua scientist to reduce his data to manageable proportions; that is, to order his materials in such a way that meaningful conclusions of a more or less precise nature emerge. Unless these two criteria of precision and significance are met, the result of the scholar's labors becomes not science but rather scientism. It is the broad thesis of this essay that students and thinkers in the field of nuclear strategy are practitioners of the latter art; that their work, for the most part, has been characterized by a lack of even the rudiments of precision, and in some cases by a dearth of relevance, both for their narrow areas of specialization, and for the larger social world to which any student of society must relate.

Let there be no mistaken notion here that this failing might only shake the foundations of a few ivory towers. Its reverberations have the most profound implications imaginable for the conduct of life on this planet, indeed, for the very existence of that life. If we misunderstand the nature of political party organization in large urban areas, then we fail to comprehend what is to some an important condition of our lives, at high costs to our academic egos. If we misunderstand the nature of nuclear strategy, we simply fail.

The study and the making of nuclear strategy is not an intellectual exercise. Academic visionaries who perhaps rightly foresee the day of a

This selection is published for the first time. The author is an instructor of political science at Pennsylvania State University, Ogontz.

science of society, the fruits of which are comparable to those of the science of matter, like to think that they are in the process of recapitulating the experience of physical science. This vision typically takes one of two forms. The first assumes that, given enough data and an appropriate methodology, a Newton of the social sciences will one day have a "eureka." Suddenly it will all fall into place as the missing link is intuited. Adherents of this first school call for increased research according to the particular interests of the individual scholar while we are waiting for our Newton.

The second myth calls for immediate attempts to supply a general theory or framework, within which most of our data will fit. Once the analytical framework is set, we can go about filling it in and fulfilling the promises that we have made to ourselves. Adherents of this school feel that we need organization in our efforts to advance the discipline, that we need perspective on what we are doing.

These processes take time. And time is both the crucial resource at the command of those concerned with political socialization, voting behavior, legislative process and comparative politics, and the root of an extremely important differentiation between these scholars and those concerned with nuclear strategies. For what strategic thinkers most noticeably lack is time. They cannot wait for a Newton, nor can they slowly go about the torturous process of filling in the extant frameworks. The stakes are too high.

This suggests that a scientific study of strategy is perhaps inappropriate for our times. For the scientist is beset with the notion that it will all work out in the long run; but there is, unfortunately, no long run when the topic is war and peace. As citizens we cannot permit the mystique of science to blur our perceptions of the real world. It appears, however, that contemporary analyses of strategy do precisely that.

Nor can we perversely comfort ourselves with the notion that the social scientist is irrelevant. For today's military world is (at least partly) the world of Herman Kahn, Klaus Knorr, Thomas Schelling and Glenn Snyder.

Strategic thinkers have almost universally failed to perceive what makes them different from students of other aspects of political behavior. Certainly they think their own work is more important. But in their method and approach to the problem, they have recast themselves in the model of the social scientist who has world enough and time.

The concern in this essay then, is not a substantive, but rather a

methodological one. It will not focus on the description and evaluation of the various nuclear strategies identified in the literature, but with the question of what kind of assumptions about the world, about the political process, about warfare, and about human nature, strategies are based upon.

II

There seem to be, in general, three perspectives from which to study nuclear strategy. In this section and in the two that follow, we will examine each one individually.

The first approach can be called "pure strategy." It is characterized by basic assumptions of utility, perfect knowledge, perfect rationality, and agreement among the participants in the conflict concerning the rules of the game.

The basic analytical tool here is classical mathematical game theory after Von Neumann and Morgenstern.¹ Other pure strategists start with analysis of the generic phenomenon of conflict. As Boulding puts it, ". . . In order to develop a theoretical system adequate to deal with the problem of war and peace, it is necessary to cast the net wider and study conflict as a general social process of which war (is) a special case."² Something in Boulding's suggestion that we can deal with conflict within a logical framework does not ring true. It is the necessary assumption of all scholars that their subject makes sense, that it actually is amenable to analysis. From the beginning, then, we must come to grips with a basic question: does conflict make sense, does war make sense, does nuclear war make sense? It is tempting to answer "no," and be done with it. It is tempting to say that war is logical only in a state of nature, that we no longer live in a state of nature, and to grant that we can never hope to understand illogical things. But we cannot abdicate our responsibility, and so we must think about the unthinkable and attempt to analyze the unanalyzable. Witness the following from the prolix Herman Kahn: "In our times, . . . thermonuclear war may seem unthinkable, immoral, insane, hideous, or highly unlikely, but it is not impossible. To act intelligently, we must learn as much as we can about the risks. We may thereby be able better to avoid nuclear war."³

¹ See John Von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern, *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* (Princeton: 1947).

² Kenneth Boulding, *Conflict and Defense* (New York: 1963), p. vii.

³ Herman Kahn, *Thinking About the Unthinkable* (New York: 1962), p. 19.

There must be order to the world, and it is the scholar's job to find it. So the problem of whether it is at all logically justified must be left in abeyance. Here occurs the first of a series of begged questions.

We turn first to game theory. Its goal is a "prescription of how a rational player should behave in a given game situation when the preferences of (the) player and of all other players are given in utility units."⁴ If we, then, (1) know what the situation is, (2) know what the players' preferences are, (3) can give each preference of each player a numerical value representing its utility to him, and (4) can assume that each player is rational, we can supposedly reach a solution to the problem which will minimize the losses and maximize the gains of all the parties to the conflict.

Are these conclusions ever met in reality? Probably not. This would seem a sufficient answer to destroy the applicability of game theory. But we can beg this question too, by *assuming* the conditions. But, if strategy is not an intellectual exercise, to treat it as such is to treat it as something which it clearly is not, hence, to misunderstand it. The strategic thinker must realize that this is one case where the costs outweigh the payoffs in treating each situation as model.

Can we speak, in strategic terms, of lives as utiles (the measure of utility)? Such an assignment must be made as Rapoport says,

if the decision problem is to be formulated . . . : the fewer megadeaths (or say megadeaths per ton of concrete) on our side and the more on the other side, the better. In this way, strategic thinking, with its built-in pressures for simplification, builds its elaborate theoretical edifices on vulgar or naive assumptions.⁵

Can the numbers in game matrices representing utilities be duplicated in the real world? As a matter of fact, people probably do think in terms of rough numerical utilities in their ordering of preferences. However, the crudity of this measurement is anathema to the game theoretician, for precision is a necessity in his logic. Does the assumption that utilities are precisely expressed actually make it so? Of course it does not; again a case of begging the question: ". . . Although it certainly is not possible, in practice, to assign precise numbers to these

⁴ Anatol Rapoport, *Fights, Games, and Debates* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: 1960), pp. 226-227.

⁵ Anatol Rapoport, *Strategy and Conscience* (New York: 1964), p. 91. See also pp. 84-91.

values, there is a logical method for describing, estimating, and comparing them which can be illustrated numerically and graphically.”⁶

Beside the basic question of whether utilities may be assigned, there is a further complication. Rapoport calls attention to the necessity of the utilities being ranked on an interval scale.⁷ Not only must we be able to say that Washington, D.C., is more important than New York City, but we also must know precisely how much more important it is. To say that this task is impossible is not quite true, for we can always assume that it is possible, given various values to each, and examine the ramifications of our utility preferences under diverse conditions.

It is accepted today that the simplest form of game theoretic analysis, the two-person, zero-sum game, is hardly even a crude approximation of reality. Its rules, that there be two players (the Western democratic world and the Communist world), and that the losses of one equal the gains of the other, miss the mark by a wide margin. Schelling says that “. . . War—whether a ‘fighting’ war or a process of strategic maneuver—is not a zero-sum game.”⁸ It is only at this level, though, that game theory fulfills its goal, as suggested above, of a prescription for rational action. We are left then with an optimum strategy for chess, or checkers, or tic-tac-toe, but most assuredly not for war.

Perhaps the differentiating factor in war is the lack of saddlepoints, or strategies that perform the minimax function for all players. The absence of saddlepoints means that

we can no longer speak even of the expected-utility-maximizing strategy. For we are no longer facing Nature, who unconcernedly mixes her strategies but still allows us to choose the best counter strategy against her mixture. In a zero-sum game we face a rational opponent who will discern the strategy we choose against his mixture. Consequently, we must mix our own strategies in order to confound him. This amounts to abdicating our decision-making prerogative and leaving the choice of strategy to chance.⁹

Such a game without saddlepoints can only be analyzed, therefore, if the players’ choices are concealed, and if utility is to be maximized in

⁶ Glenn H. Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense* (Princeton: 1961), p. 259.

⁷ Rapoport, *Fights*, p. 125.

⁸ Thomas C. Schelling, “Experimental Games and Bargaining Theory,” *World Politics*, XIV (October 1961), p. 50.

⁹ Rapoport, *Strategy*, p. 82.

the long run.¹⁰ What we have then is a situation where our only rational shortrun strategy is chance, which over the long run will become our ally. But as suggested in the beginning of this essay, there very well may be no long run. Two resultant implications exhaust the range of possibilities here. First, decision-makers in the real world are not likely to leave their choices to chance if there is a long run. For they share a bias with the scientist in favor of the probability of solving our difficulties, sometimes by means of the intellect, sometimes by muscle. Second, the more likely case, in which there is no long run: what we know about nuclear weapons indicates a closing of the issue without the opportunity for chance to win out.

In fact the world today seems very close to the situation inherent in a non-zero-sum game without saddlepoints, and hence without a logical solution. Kissinger seems to describe this in the following characterization: "Because the Soviet rulers pride themselves on their ability to 'see through' our protestations of peaceful intentions, the only possibility for affecting their actions resides in the possession of superior force."¹¹

A possible source of confusion here is the notion of pure strategy. Kissinger suggests that military strategy is only pure when the conflict is seen as a manifestation of politically irreconcilable differences and hostilities which demand a battle to the death.¹² It is not at all clear that such conditions prevail today; if they do not, then the appropriateness of pure strategic thought is in serious doubt. In a less than total war, factors not considered in game theory must be taken into account. Oskar Morgenstern holds that "war aims are always political. Once formulated, they have to be translated into military terms . . ."¹³ Factors which complicate, and are in many cases critical, are not admitted to the analysis.

One of the problems of social science is the idea of a self-fulfilling and self-denying prophecy. The prediction of an event has an effect upon its likelihood. It may delay or hasten it, it may help to bring it about, or ensure that it doesn't happen. In any case, social scientists are not at all clear about the dynamics of the process. The situation is all the more acute in nuclear strategy, for we can take it as a matter of faith

¹⁰ Rapoport, *Fights*, p. 162.

¹¹ Henry A. Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (abridged ed.), (Garden City, N. Y.: 1958), p. 3.

¹² Kissinger, p. 105.

¹³ Oskar Morgenstern, *The Question of National Defense* (New York: 1959), p. 140.

that we would not want to help bring about the war we discuss so glibly. Yet this is another of the difficulties of strategic thought. For instance, when we plan a civil defense program, does not the real possibility exist that we hasten the day of its use? ¹⁴ What if strategic analysis should find that we can recover from a nuclear war of limited proportions and restore our lives to something approaching what they were before? Doesn't the very process of engaging in strategic thought, as it makes nuclear holocaust more believable, make it more probable? ¹⁵ This should be understood in no sense as a plea to separate members of the war-peace establishment from their jobs, but only as an elucidation of some questions that serious students of nuclear warfare come up against.

Another gap in contemporary thinking about war is the question of morality. Ideology, ethics, and morality are not considered as elements in a theory of defense:

The moral issue is something to think about only when it is not a hindrance. It is a hindrance in strategic thinking and therefore must be dismissed either scornfully . . . or regretfully. . . . The strategic thinker cannot be reached by moral arguments.¹⁶

In one essay, Kahn suggests an inter-city exchange as an alternative to a mutually destructive total war. This suggestion is made in the light of moral constraints.¹⁷ There would seem to be, however, different moralities in the situation. One would hold that the less dead solution was a more moral one. Another would find this "trading of souls" reprehensible even if it did result in fewer dead. We need some clarification concerning what we mean by morality here. This is not to say that Kahn's morality is wrong, only that it is by no means universally acceptable, and that this or any kind of morality cannot simply stand as given in a morally confused world. Suffice it to say here that the amorality of contemporary strategic thinking may be further evidence of its inappropriateness in an age where morality may be our only hope. Like the classical economists, today's prophets of doom leave us no hope.

This is but one type of a more generic problem typical of the thought here under analysis. Strategic thinking has one very huge gap:

¹⁴ See T. C. Martin and D. C. Latham, *Strategy for Survival* (Tuscon, Ariz.: 1963), p. 199.

¹⁵ See Herman Kahn, "Some Comments on Controlled War," in Klaus Knorr and Thornton Read, eds., *Limited Strategic War* (New York: 1962), pp. 33-34.

¹⁶ Rapoport, *Strategy*, p. xxiii. See also Boulding, Chapter 14.

¹⁷ Kahn, "Comments," pp. 41-44.

there aren't any people in the system. Consider a three-person game in which one dollar is to be divided by a majority vote. It would make little sense for all three players to coalesce together insofar as only two are needed and the returns to three could not be as great as to only two. "But which two? Assuming the personalities, kinship ties, and whatnot to exert no influence (there is no room for such matters in game theory), we can sidestep the problem . . . and say simply that some pair will form a coalition."¹⁸

Another example of what may be termed the "people gap" may be taken from the above coalition situation. Rapoport describes it:

The real-life problem, then (e.g., the problem which the political scientist faces), is to relate the events of political life to strategic considerations. But we have seen that even in our simplest coalition game we have not been able to find strategic considerations which would lend stability to any coalition. . . . The mathematician, however, is not bothered by this. . . .¹⁹

In this case, and in many other directly military cases, those things for which game theory has no room are precisely those things which, in the final analysis, are causal.

What game theory does then is to talk about human situations as if humans were not a part of them. It ignores human characteristics and substitutes the characteristics of numbers. To represent people by ciphers may lend clarity, a quality of abstractness, and meaningful insights into the nature of conflict otherwise not available; as a device for strategic thought in the nuclear age, it is extremely questionable.

Finally, the limitations noted here in the game theoretic approach to nuclear strategy suggest the necessity of turning to other fields, other approaches. As Boulding says, "For a true understanding of conflict we also have to examine love, affection, empathy, and community of feeling."²⁰ We must consider "the role of ethics, of the dynamics of social structure, and of individual psychology in situations of conflict."²¹

Some of these concepts and others will be examined in the next two sections on environmental determinism and decision-making. These approaches have been suggested as a means of bridging the gap between the pseudo-reality of pure strategy and the facts of nuclear life.

¹⁸ Rapoport, *Fights*, p. 198. ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

²⁰ Boulding, p. 57. ²¹ Rapoport, *Fights*, p. xii.

III

Pure strategic analysis has been heavily criticised because it involves the study of conflict without any recourse to the nature of man, the character of nations, and the interrelationship between men and nations. The game theorist need not consider psychological, sociological, and cultural variables, because he views the makers of warfare as inanimate objects sharing a common logic and rationality. In his schema, then, actors and environment are held constant.

The skeptic, however, holds that these gaps create in large measure the pitfalls of strategic analysis. How can we, he asks, talk about war without talking about the character of nations? He might even take this one step further, asking how we can talk about nations without talking about men. If he stops with the first question he is likely to posit some sort of relationship between the culture and the behavior of nations. We will deal with hypotheses of this type in this section, saving for the next section hypotheses concerning the relationship between decision processes and war.

The literature of warfare is full of statements like the following: “. . . Preventive war would require a fundamental change in the moral attitudes of the American people”²²; Or: “. . . the nation’s moral and emotional aversion to violence is joined by a strong streak of pugnacity. There broods in the American mind a fighting spirit that recalls the days when the United States was a bumptious young nation trying to prove itself to the world . . .”²³ Or, from the same author: the Communist approach sanctions violence “as an integral part of the inevitable process of historical evolution,” characterized by “moral indifference, emotional discipline, rational opportunism, tactical flexibility, and power-consciousness.”²⁴

It is not at all clear that these represent much of an advance over the imprecision of game theory. Upon the truism that the “phenomenon called ‘international politics’ is meaningfully related to the setting or environment or milieu in which political decisions are taken and exe-

²² Gene M. Lyons and Louis Morton, *Schools for Strategy*, New York, 1965, p. 17.

²³ R. E. Osgood, *Limited War* (Chicago: 1957), p. 34.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

cuted,"²⁵ is erected an alternative theory of international relations. The environmental determinist in general asserts a causal relationship between "some environmental factor or set of factors on the one hand, and some attitude, action, or state of affairs, on the other."²⁶

As a broad generality, this may be perfectly valid. It does highlight another set of critical relationships in the analysis of war and peace. But again we return to the central axiom of this paper: we do not have time to spend highlighting broad categories of variables.

Sprout and Sprout identify five general hypotheses concerning the relationship of man and his milieu. The first, labeled "environmental determinism," posits

an invariable correlation between some set of environmental "causes" and environing "effects." Man by this hypothesis has no choice; indeed, he is, by definition, incapable of choice. The properties of the milieu determine his activities. Hence, his past activities are explicable and his future activities predictable by reference to the variation of some set of environmental causes.²⁷

There are a number of problems with this hypothesis which make it inappropriate for our use. First, we may safely reject the notion that man has no choice for much the same reason as we have rejected the emphasis of game theory. It may in fact be true that the properties of an inanimate environment, like the properties of numbers, are the sole cause of a set of effects. But we cannot live with this; in fact, were it true it would destroy the foundations of all research. Further, research on war and peace should treat the lessening of conflict as a value; whereas a strictly deterministic hypothesis leaves no room for values.

More practically, such hypotheses require unlimited and complete knowledge about the environment, which we clearly do not possess. Take for example the position of the voting analyst whose theoretical model was challenged when it failed to correctly predict the results of an election. He answered that his model was perfect, but his data unfortunately was not. In an uncertain world, then, a completely deterministic hypothesis cannot be accepted on either an empirical or an ethical basis.

The second type of proposition Sprout and Sprout call "free-will environmentalism." In it

²⁵ H. and M. Sprout, "Environmental Factors," in J. N. Rosenau, ed., *International Relations and Foreign Policy* (New York: 1961), p. 106.

²⁶ *Ibid.* ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

nature is conceived as a wise and purposeful entity guiding human destiny. Man is the target of Nature's signals. If he is wise he heeds them. But the environmentalist conceives man as capable of choosing the "wrong road"—albeit much to his future sorrow and frustration.²⁸

As a guide to an understanding of the nature of conflict this must also be rejected. To do otherwise is to invite engagement in the sterile metaphysic concerning the meaning of "Nature," and "free-will." The Miltonian discourse may save our souls; it will not save our civilization.

A third proposition is that of "environmental probabilism." This is a "general label for various behavioral models by which choices and decisions are explained or predicted, on the basis of probable conformity to a hypothetical norm."²⁹

The theory of games would seem to be of this sort. This reformulation, however, suggests another deficiency in the model. The hypothetical norm of rationality has met with such virulent criticism that it cannot be accepted as the basis for the ordering of human behavior. The study of nuclear warfare demands above all else a sense of realism. Models will not do: their costs, insofar as they cloud our perceptions of the world in which we really do live, are too high. Other applications of environmental probabilism would doubtless suffer from the same defects.

A fourth hypothesis is that of "cognitive behavioralism." A "person reacts to his milieu as he apperceives it—that is, as he perceives it and interprets it in the light of past experiences."³⁰ This approach is in its essentials identical with the decision-making approach, which will be dealt with more fully in the next section. But, from the perspective of the precision necessary for a science of strategy, it fails badly. It posits that if we can know everything about the decision-maker's cognitive map, we can reconstruct his decision processes. It is these decisions which are in the final analysis the immediate cause of the maintenance of peace and the beginning of war. However, the problem of filling in the decision-maker's cognitive map has never been solved to the satisfaction of the empiricist. Typically, crude speculation results.

Finally we come to the most acceptable statement of the relationship between the milieu and the behavior of nations. In "environmental possibilism"

²⁸ *Ibid.* ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 109. ³⁰ *Ibid.*

. . . choice is bypassed. The milieu as a whole or some set of environmental factors is conceived as a sort of matrix which limits the operational results of whatever is attempted.³¹

Here, the environment, or parts of it, is seen as limiting, conditioning, or partially determining behavior within the system. What is perhaps the most popular operational statement of environmental possibilism concerns the role of ideology. It is posited that the ideology of a particular country, like the Soviet Union, strongly conditions the government's actions in particular areas. The writings of Lenin, Marx, Stalin, etc., are held to be the text in which the regime's specific behavior is rooted.

Presumably we can better understand a country's nuclear strategy by standing back a step and first concerning ourselves with its ideology. If we understand the Soviets' theory of government and their philosophy of history, then we can make the jump to an analysis of their nuclear posture. Now this is not the place to engage in the perennial quarrel over the utility of this approach, but some general comments are necessary in the broad context of our problem.

We can begin by granting, with McCloskey, that an understanding of the ideologies of conflicting nations may be more important than knowledge concerning their diapering habits.³² It would seem presumptuous, however, to conclude much more. Scholars have never agreed on whether ideology causes or justifies behavior. The weight of the argument would seem to rest with those who contend that "it is doubtful that even the most exacting study of Marxist classics might shed much light upon the problems confronting policy-formers on either side of the cold war."³³

Few scholars take the position of environmental possibilism without hedging. From Dinerstein's work on Soviet attitudes towards war, one gets the feeling that their military strategy is based not on ideology but on objectives and subjective calculations of value and utility similar to those expressed in the literature on American nuclear strategy.³⁴ Brzezinski suggests that in the long run ideology is relevant to the Soviet conduct of international affairs, while the imperatives of the moment

³¹ Sprout and Sprout, "Environmental Factors," p. 108.

³² H. McCloskey, "Strategies for a Science of International Politics," in R. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and B. Sapin, eds., *Foreign Policy Decision-Making* (Glencoe, Ill.: 1962), p. 202.

³³ Harvey Wheeler, "The Role of Myth Systems in American-Soviet Relations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, IV, 2 (June 1960), p. 179.

³⁴ H. Dinerstein, *War and the Soviet Union* (New York: 1959), *passim*.

will control in the short run.³⁵ Ulam concludes that "Soviet ideology . . . is neither a detailed guide to action, nor a superficial creed vulnerable to exposure."³⁶ Hsieh's book on China's nuclear strategy tends to support the contention that the origins of nuclear postures are not in ideology, but rather in technological and military requirements and necessity. Nuclear strategies stem from an analysis of strengths and weaknesses, not from indigenous Chinese thought.³⁷

Leites' classic work on the operational code of the Bolsheviks sums up the argument neatly. He attempts to portray the code of the Soviet elite in the early years. Among the limitations inherent in prediction of behavior from knowledge of the code are its ambiguity, inconsistency, and incompleteness. Furthermore we cannot be sure what is propaganda and what is serious. He feels it naive to assume that officials are constantly opening their copies of Lenin and Stalin. What is more likely is that the flavor and mood has been assimilated.³⁸

One other analytic tool potentially useful in analyzing the connections between behavior and environment is systems analysis. Kaplan has attempted to apply systems analysis to international politics:

A scientific politics can develop only if the materials of politics are treated in terms of systems of action. A system of action is a set of variables so related, in contradistinction to its environment, that describable behavioral regularities characterize the internal relationships of the variables to each other and the external relationships of the set of individual variables to combinations of external variables.³⁹

What systems analysis amounts to in its application here is the categorization of relevant variables and the classification of processes. It is a descriptive and not a predictive theory. If we wish to describe an international system, we need to know about its essential rules, its rules of change, its actor classificatory variables, its capabilities, and its informational levels and processes.⁴⁰ We need to know about inputs,

³⁵ Z. Brzezinski, "Communist Ideology and International Affairs," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, IV, 3 (September 1960), p. 269.

³⁶ Adam B. Ulam, "Soviet Ideology and Soviet Foreign Policy," *World Politics*, XI, 2 (January 1959), p. 170.

³⁷ A. L. Hsieh, *Communist China's Strategy in the Nuclear Era* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: 1962).

³⁸ Nathan C. Leites, *A Study of Bolshevism* (Glencoe, Ill.: 1953), pp. 16-18.

³⁹ Morton A. Kaplan, *System and Process in International Relations* (New York: 1957), p. 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

outputs, step-level functions, stability, equilibrium, and sub-systems.

Clearly the utility of Kaplan's schema depends upon our ability to fully understand the relevant variables. And this is where his theoretical framework fails, for we lack this data. Until we have the data it will remain merely a framework. Within the context of this essay, frameworks for analysis will not suffice.

The point is not that scholars shouldn't do things of this nature, but that they should be cognizant that in so doing they really add quite little to systematic knowledge about nuclear warfare. It has been suggested in this section that hypotheses linking national behavior to environment, ideology, national character, etc., are for the most part unrealistic and unworkable. It is, on the one hand, specious to suggest that Marx, or for that matter, the Constitution of the United States, would be of much relevance to military thinkers when missiles start flying. On the other hand, if such ideologies are relevant, it seems virtually impossible to determine the extent to which they are. We are left with gross generalizations and unresearchable hypotheses. From this point of view, various theories of environmental determinism have failed to fill the gap in our understanding of nuclear strategy which stems from the inadequacies of pure strategic thought.

IV

The preceding sections of this essay have attempted to show that the pure strategic and environmental determinist approaches leave substantial gaps in the search for an understanding of nuclear strategy. An alternative to the perspectives of mathematical logic and culture and sociology is the social-psychological approach of decision-making. This section will be concerned with the possible applications of decision-making analysis to nuclear strategy.

The decision-making approach has achieved some currency recently in political science. Based as it is upon the assumption that national behavior should be seen not as a product of a metaphysical entity called the state, but rather as the behavior of individuals who make decisions in the name of the state, it would seem a fruitful method for bypassing the problems outlined in the preceding sections. For we can merely study the decision processes of individual decision-makers, an infinitely sounder procedure than deducing the nature of an act from causes in the environment or from a theory of utility.

In general, an adequate formulation in regard to a decision concerning the choice of a particular strategy of nuclear warfare would necessitate answers to the following questions: what economic, moral, military, and sundry variables are deemed relevant by the decision-maker? (This approach cannot be concerned with the situation as it actually exists. It centers in all cases upon the decision-maker's perception of the situation.) How is the determination of relevance made? What is the relationship between the relevant factors? What objectives and goals are involved and effected? What is the relationship between goals and the situation as it is apperceived? By what method are objectives selected? What is the nature of the relationship between the objectives and the action necessary to reach them? ⁴¹

With regard to the determination of relevance, there clearly exists the possibility of partly conscious or unconscious motives on the part of the decision-maker playing a crucial role.⁴² This raises two questions, one practical, the other of a methodological nature. First, is the assumption valid that decisions are made rationally? If they are, then which rationality? Economic man takes us back to the pitfalls of economic theory; morally rational man is inscrutable. To understand irrational man we must examine him psychoanalytically over an extended period of time, which brings us to the practical problem: decision-makers will not submit to such investigation, and understandably so.

It is possible, however, to surmount this difficulty. Patchen suggests that we can get at motivational dispositions through the published materials on and by the subject. We could analyze, furthermore, the "conditions of reward and punishment in a person's past history which are known to contribute to various motives."⁴³ It must be granted, though, that such a device would return us to the ambiguities rejected in game theoretic analysis and cultural determinism.

The emphasis on personality has a further defect. How are we to know "which aspects of the individual's personality are really crucial to an explanation of his behavior qua decision-maker"? ⁴⁴ And, when motivation is assigned, it typically takes one of three forms. Either it is

⁴¹ G. Snyder, p. 66.

⁴² Martin Patchen, "Decision Theory in the Study of National Defense: Problems and a Proposal," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, IX, 2 (June 1965), pp. 168-169.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 171-173.

⁴⁴ Richard Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and B. Sapin, "Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Relations," in Snyder, *et al.*, eds., p. 41.

assumed to be a unidirectional motive of all decision-makers, a combination of various motives operating in the same fashion in all, or the discrete individual is viewed in isolation as representative of all.⁴⁵ Each form has a number of drawbacks which need not be detailed here.

The nature of the objectives of the decision-making process adds a further dimension to the problem. Snyder points out that

the task of operationalizing the term "objective" and of discovering the content or properties of concrete national objectives is not made easier by the fact that the decision-makers often do not operationalize their statement of objectives. . . .⁴⁶

An example of the fruits of decision-making analysis is instructive. Glenn Snyder examines the possibility of aggressive acts by an aggressor nation. Such a calculus of risk will depend on how highly the aggressor values his objectives, the costs to the aggressor resulting from various responses, "the probability of various responses," and the "probability of winning the objective with each possible response."⁴⁷

It is suggestive of the problems of such research that there are at least two unknown quantities in the equation for the aggressor. He cannot know except in a very rough sense what his costs will be, and he can make only a crude approximation of the probability of various responses. He can probably make a guess of the chances of each objective being achieved. We discussed earlier the problems of attaching utilities to objectives and ordering them on an interval scale as the first element in the calculus requires; there seems to be no reason to assume that the difficulties would be alleviated given a different analytical framework. In fact, the problems are compounded: what the decision-maker does essentially is to construct his own game matrix. The analyst of such processes has closed the circle when he has reconstructed the game matrix: the non-zero-sum game without saddlepoints that the decision-maker must devise if he understands that warfare still admits of no minimax solution.

In fact, Snyder seems to grasp this:

. . . We are dealing here with factors which are highly subjective and uncertain, not subject to exact measurement, and not commensurate except in an intuitive way. Nevertheless, these are the basic factors which the potential aggressor must weigh in determining the probable costs and gains of his contemplated venture.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ R. Snyder, *et al.*, p. 138. ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁴⁷ G. Snyder, p. 12. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Those who must decide to resist aggression are faced with the same problem. Their calculations are based on how highly they value that which is threatened, how highly they value the gains associated with various responses, the costs of response, the probability of successfully defending that which is being threatened, and "the change in the probability of future enemy attacks on other objectives which would follow from various responses."⁴⁹ Again the presence of unknown probabilities and utilities makes the equation unsolvable.

The usefulness of the decision-making approach in political science is maximized when the approximation of the optimal solution that it certainly does provide will suffice. When decisions can be made with time or reflection, when judgments are reasoned rather than emoted, when conditions are such that the personalities and biases of the deciders do not cloud and distort the alternatives available, when reliable information as to the nature of the response is supplied, then the decision-making approach becomes an extremely valuable tool. Such conditions do not obtain, however, when the issue is war and peace.

Consider the following situation. The President of the United States is handed a letter by the Ambassador of the Soviet Union. It is an ultimatum which promises swift and immediate destruction of the United States unless American armed forces are withdrawn from Europe and Asia posthaste. Aware of the possibility of an event of this type, position papers covering this and virtually every possible contingency are in existence. The President calls for them and peruses them with care.

It is suggested that the President's decision is going to be made not on the basis of these predetermined positions, but on the basis of his sense of duty, and perhaps more important, his conscience. The decision-making approach does not and indeed cannot take such factors into account. Morton Deutsch holds that decisions under conditions of extreme risk, tension, and impending crisis are more likely to be made on the basis of "anxiety, stereotypes, self-esteem defense maneuvers, and social conformity pressures, than by simple rational estimates of economic loss and gain."⁵⁰ Under such conditions, ". . . we do not know and are hardly able to guess how rational decisions . . . are likely to be, or whether predominantly irrational acts or a new soberness will prevail."⁵¹

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ M. Deutsch, "Some Considerations Relevant to National Policy," *Journal of Social Issues*, 17 (1961), p. 64, quoted in Patchen, pp. 165-166.

⁵¹ Klaus Knorr, "Limited Strategic War," in Knorr and Read, eds., p. 25.

What is clear, then, about decisions made under the above conditions is the lack of objective clarity in the situation. As Rapoport notes, "‘Calculated risk’ has become a common expression with policy makers. It must be noted that with most policy makers in our public life, ‘calculations’ as they apply to risk carry only a metaphysical meaning. Risks are very seldom calculated: instead, decisions are made according to one’s biases and then rationalized."⁵²

One attempt to operationalize the decision-making approach is Richard Snyder’s reconstruction of the decision to resist aggression in Korea. The essay contains fine insights and may be comparable to the analysis of a hypothetical decision to use nuclear weapons. What prevents it from being useful for our purposes is the fact that his framework nowhere permits him to contend that he could have predicted the decision before the fact: he can only reconstruct.⁵³ It may be a victory for science to be able to reconstruct the decision to fight a nuclear war; the values of such a victory for mankind are less clear.

One cannot help but be pessimistic concerning the fruits of the approach here under review. It has been suggested that we can cope with some of the problems noted here by viewing decision-makers as part of a system of social institutions.⁵⁴ The alert reader will perceive at once that we are brought full circle to the morass of difficulties characteristic of the various types of environmental determinism, which decision-making sought initially to bypass. Another observer has noted that decision-making under conditions of risk has all the properties of such activity with certainty. There is a caveat, however: there must be a long run.⁵⁵

Foreign policy decision-making, then, is an exceedingly complex enterprise. It involves a wide range of objectives, projects, and deliberations; its clientele is heterogeneous; it requires the integration of many perspectives; characterized by complexity, instability and uncertainty as it is, prediction and control are difficult; there are few chances to experiment, and infrequent replicability; information is not particularly reliable; measurement of effectiveness is difficult; and finally, we do not typically discern the full range of implications when problem situations arise.⁵⁶

⁵² Rapoport, *Fights*, pp. 164–165.

⁵³ See R. Snyder and G. Paige, "The United States Decision to Resist Aggression in Korea," in Snyder *et al.*, eds., pp. 206–249.

⁵⁴ R. Snyder, *et al.*, p. 41.

⁵⁵ Rapoport, *Strategy*, p. 12.

⁵⁶ R. Snyder, *et al.*, p. 104.

This suggests the inappropriateness of the decision-making model for our purposes. The rationality model must be implemented and interpreted with the utmost care. Even then it will only be useful if, as Verba contends, “. . . one does not forget that it is an approximation.”⁶⁷

v

The contention of this paper is that each of the three major modes of strategic thought must inevitably lead to an impasse. When game theoretic analysis reaches the non-zero-sum game without saddlepoints, it can analyze no further, given its present state of development. The solution at this point must be based upon the characteristics of the players. Here a choice must be made: are the players nations or are they individuals acting in the name of nations? If nations are the players, then the strategy analyst has recourse to some type of theory of environmental determinism. This approach cannot really be applied to any effect at all, for the manner in which a nation is likely to behave can never be determined with the requisite precision, either through analysis of ideology, history, economic and social structure, etc., or a combination of any or all of these factors.

If, on the other hand, we take the individual acting in the name of the state as the player, the unit of analysis becomes the individual decision-maker. Here critical problems arise in the form of identification and availability of the decision-makers. There is a deeper problem, however: the decision-maker's alternatives dissolve into the same non-zero-sum game without saddlepoints that we started with, and it still cannot be analyzed.

The circle of the logic of strategic thinking is, then, closed. It is a logic of imprecision. It assumes perfect rationality, and perfect information. Perhaps it is not too much to say that if we had perfect rationality and perfect information, we would have no need to engage in strategic thinking.

It is a logic of irrelevance. It leads to findings such as the following from a study by two observers on the effect of a limited nuclear attack upon seventy standard metropolitan areas in the United States: such an attack would kill 65% of the Roman Catholics in our population, 33% of the Protestants, and 93% of the Jews. It would wipe out 76% of our

⁶⁷ Sidney Verba, “Assumptions of Rationality and Non-Rationality in Models of the International System,” *World Politics*, XIV (October 1961), p. 116.

tool-and-die makers, 79% of our transport equipment managers, 77% of our authors, and 78% of our social scientists. Finally, “. . . the structure of the United States Congress would be significantly altered to give overwhelming voting power to Southern Democrats and Republicans at the expense of non-Southern Democratic representatives.”⁵⁸

The irrelevance of strategic thought is perhaps best suggested although not intentionally, by Herman Kahn, whose calculations are based in part on the assumption that “*almost* nobody wants to go down in history as the first man to kill 100,000,000 people.”⁵⁹ It is instructive to note the reasons why Kahn bought his home where he did, presumably outside of the above metropolitan communities. It lies, according to Herzog, beyond “the destructive range of a twenty-megaton bomb dropped on New York. A few windows might be broken, but he would have fallout only with rare wind conditions. ‘I make such calculations automatically,’ Kahn said.”⁶⁰

Is there an alternative to this kind of reaction? Can one dismiss the scientific approach to strategic thought, when one sees everywhere the fruits of both physical and social science? The crucial difference is that these things have been accomplished because people have had time to look, and think, and look some more, and plan, and meditate, and act when the circumstances warranted. The military thinker lacks this leisure, and this is why his art can never become a science.

It is not, therefore, deficiencies in our analytic tools that doom the development of a meaningful science of strategy: for, given time, these tools can be improved. What limits us is the condition of our age.

⁵⁸ R. A. Dentler and P. Cutright, *Hostage America* (Boston: 1963), pp. 10-19.

⁵⁹ Herman Kahn, *On Thermonuclear War* (Princeton: 1960), p. 171. Italics added.

⁶⁰ Arthur Herzog, *The War-Peace Establishment* (New York: 1965), p. 77.

T W O

The New Conservatism of the Behavioralists

The authors of the following articles are concerned with what they regard as inevitable tendencies within the behavioral approach to view with approval the political system as static, closed, and conservative. They point out that while the behavioralists disclaim the necessity and desirability of value-oriented research, they are nevertheless erecting their own normative edifice. Though this new conservatism has never been made explicit, it is so preeminent as to require of scholars a reexamination of behaviorism's value-free pretensions.

James Petras

Ideology and United States Political Scientists

THE IDEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS AND THEIR MAIN CONCERNS

Of the ideologies current in the social science field the most popular and pervasive appears to be that which espouses stability and whose major theoretical anchor is the concept of "equilibrium" or "balance." Emerging from the detailed empirical studies of voting behavior by Berelson and others,¹ and on the other side, from the highly abstract work of Talcott Parsons, the idea of "balance" is both a method of confronting the data and an explanation of the data. Parsons notes, concerning the views of the voting studies: "Particularly in their final chapter but also at various points through the volume, the authors make generalizations that would have been generated deductively by use of the theoretical model with which I have been working."²

This view of society and its "mechanisms" (to quote Parsons) will be briefly summarized in order to bring into focus the underlying values and assumptions of what will be called the *school of stabilizing equilibriumism* (or simply "the equilibrals"). The prime value concept under-

¹ Berelson, *et al.*, *Voting* (Chicago, 1954).

² T. Parsons, "'Voting' and the Equilibrium of the American Political System," in Eugene Burdick and Arthur J. Brodbeck (eds.), *American Voting Behavior* (Glencoe, Ill., 1959).

SOURCE: *Science and Society*, XXIX, 2 (Spring, 1965), 192-216. Reprinted with permission.

James Petras is assistant professor of political science at Pennsylvania State University.

lying the work of all equilibrals is stability,³ the maintenance of the ongoing system. The method of balancing describes the pairing off of opposite effects or attitudes which negate each other and lead to the continuation of the present institutional configuration with marginal changes. The flavor of this eclecticism can be seen best in Parsons: "The first two of my functional requirements were related to the balances of stability and flexibility and of involvement and indifference, the third to that between consensus and cleavage, and the fourth to that between progress and conservation."⁴ The outcome of the "balance" of the attitudes is limited participation, limited commitment, limited interest and a "policy" which allows elites (who are assumed to be the depositories of democratic values) to act.⁵ The second major concern, then, of these writers (and it is an ideological one) is not only to stabilize the system, but to maintain the kind of leadership which can perpetuate "the system." The "resultant attitudes," the product of the opposing attitudes balancing with each other, which produce largely a weak political man, are looked upon primarily as a means of allowing the elite to act. Almond, writing in a style of "the end of . . . politics," celebrates the fact that ". . . politics has relatively little importance for citizens" and that this "is an important part of the mechanism by which the set of inconsistent political orientations keep political elites in check without checking them so tightly as to make them ineffective."⁶ In his somewhat understated fashion, Almond, like the other equilibrals, finds virtue in the low importance of politics and in the *confused and inconsistent citizen*; both attitudes allow the political elite to act. Thus, the three major concerns of the equilibrals are: the stability of the system; the ability of the elite to act for that system; and widespread but low-level citizenship involvement.

The equibal view of society and its functioning "balance" is underwritten by a strong undercurrent of Burkean and conservative values: the irrational, the traditional, and custom, as the bases of individual decision-making, are seen as virtues; and very gradual change through established institutions and practices approved by the political

³Included in addition to Parsons are Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven, 1962); Almond and Verba, *Civic Culture* (Princeton, 1963); and Berelson, *et al.*, *Voting*.

⁴Parsons, *op. cit.* p. 114.

⁵S. Stouffer, *Communism and Conformity* (Garden City, 1955); R. O. Dahl, *Who Governs?*, *op. cit.*

⁶Almond and Verba, *op. cit.*, p. 483.

elite are cited as functional to the polity. Parsons expounds in his inimitable way: "The traditionalistic operation of nonrational mechanisms is a condition of the stability of the system. That they root in the solidary groupings of the society [the family, the church, and other Burkean institutions of high political virtue—J.P.] follows from the fact that support is mobilized from the integration subsystem of the society."⁷ Backing up their Burkean praise of habit and customary ways of behavior, the equilibrals note that "change" should be gradual and that it emerges in various stages. Curiously enough *change* comes from those who are indifferent, ill-informed and pulled in opposite directions by cross pressures. *Innovation* emerges from the Left, and gradually new issues get to be major points of contention and finally, when a decision is made to accept them they gradually become acceptable to everybody. The equilibrals, then, do not reject "change" altogether; they only insist that it must be sifted through the "legitimate" institutions (Congress, etc.) and the two major parties in the society.

Cleavage is also recognized as long as it is marginal and managed by other factors, "balanced" by consensus (according to Parsons) or "activation" (Berelson's term for non-political sentiments of solidarity acting as a brake on processes leading to divisive cleavage). Finally, in their conception of power, the equilibrals tend to reject the definition of the concept in terms of subordination/superordination, and to define power in terms of a generalized phenomenon resting with society and for the purpose of "mobilizing resources" for "goals." Government is the "producer" of power and the executive branch is the dominant sector of the government. Power is not perceived to be used by specific social units over others in order to maximize their advantages. The "subsystems" are unrelated to the system as a whole. "Action systems" such as economic dominants and/or subsystems are merely a point of reference, a source of inputs or an outlet for outputs.

In summary then, the ideological conception of the political system which the stabilizing equilibrals hold, their view of the reality which

⁷ T. Parsons, *op. cit.*, p. 92; see also p. 103; and *passim*. Unlike Burke, however, the equilibrals do not look with "awe and reverence" at these intermediary solidary associations like the family and religion, nor are they overwhelmed by the mystery and complexity of society; but as true instrumentalists (mechanics) they are constantly tinkering with the mechanisms to make sure the right "balances" are attained, i.e., those which will favor contemporary institutions and practices. In this sense the equilibrals are indeed Moderns—"social mechanics" is grafted onto a traditional ideology.

"democratic theory" should "fit," is that of a stable, functioning polity which is the balance of various countervailing forces and attitudes, and in which the role of political elites is primary both in directing the system and upholding democratic values.

A second major ideological school is that of the group theorists.⁸ This school takes its starting point in the concept of "interests" of various socio-economic associations or groups and the "conflicts" which result from differing interests. The major concepts of the group theorists are those of "interest," and "group conflict." The major insight of the group theorists lies in their recognition of conflict as a legitimate and major area of political life and their stress on the role played by socio-economic forces in determining the content of "political" decision-making. Less stress is given by this group to "stability" and more is placed on "who gets what, when, and how."⁹ Boundaries between the political sphere and the "social" and economic have become blurred as political decisions impinge on social groups and vice versa. Latham notes this when he writes, "Organized groups may be regarded as systems of private government while organs of the state represent a system of public government . . . the subject matter of politics is power, contrary to the view that its subject is the state, which is only one of the engines through which power is exercised."¹⁰ The state, unlike the role given to it by the stabilizers, is less the producer of power and has the more modest role of moralist, promoter, custodian and referee. Latham says of the state, "It is established to promote normative goals, as custodian of the consensus and to help formulate those goals as well as to police the agreed rules."¹¹ The key concept, then, is neither the "state" nor the "individual," but the "group." It is this concept which defines the political universe for the group theorist. Latham notes: "The groups exist for the individuals to whom they belong. Groups are devices by which the individual fulfills personal values and felt needs." Beyond the political sphere, however, and in society at large, "the group" is the basis for social life: ". . . the structure of society is associational, groups are basic . . . organized groups are structures of power and therefore within the scope of political inquiry."¹² For the group theo-

⁸ E. Latham, *The Group Basis of Politics* (Ithaca, 1952); G. McConnell, *The Decline of Agrarian Democracy* (Berkeley, 1953); and D. Truman, *The Governmental Process* (New York, 1953).

⁹ H. Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, and How?* (New York, 1958).

¹⁰ E. Latham, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13. ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14. ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

rists the primary generating force in society is the conflict between socio-economic groups; political institutions and politicians are generally viewed as a reflection of this basic process.

The group theorists find the rationale and explanation of politics in a kind of Hobbesian world. Latham expresses his view of group life as group struggle in this fashion: "Because the relations of people are myriad and shifting, subject to cycles of deterioration and decay, because the environment itself changes with each passing hour, there is a ceaseless struggle on the part of groups to dominate, neutralize or conciliate that part of their environment that presses in upon them most closely."¹³ There are two points to be made here: the struggle of groups which Latham and others observed is limited in the sense that they did not assume that fundamental changes of the economy would occur (e.g., that the workers' "group" would eliminate the capitalist "group"). Limited group struggle assumed that defeats and victories of each group did not result in their elimination, only their weakening. In addition, though the group theorists differ from the equiliberals in stressing group conflict and socio-economic forces rather than stability of the system and political elites, they also bring into their account of "how politics works" the concept of "equiliberism," albeit as a more transitory phenomenon and one still subject to the whims of group struggle. Latham refers to "public policy" as the "equilibrium reached in this struggle at any given moment and it represents a balance which the contending factions of a group instantly strive to weight in their favor."¹⁴ The second point is that the group theorists, because of their concern with "groups," become aware of changes in the internal organization of groups and their growing size. More and more, factors of large-scale organization which supersede the organized group begin to loom large: social structure and the economic system exercise power indirectly and through less formal channels.¹⁵ Even Latham recognizes this: "... organization represents concentrated power, and concentrated power can exercise a predominant influence when it encounters power which is diffuse and not concentrated, and therefore weaker. . . . The constant struggle of groups begets complexity which begets a strong tendency toward centralization."¹⁶ Obviously, Latham was still thinking of this "concentration" and "centralization" in terms of the organized group theory; the power to generalize this phenomenon in terms of a broader socio-economic framework was lacking. The problem which the growth

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 31. ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35. ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32. ¹⁶ *Loc. cit.*

of "organization" and "centralization" posed to later theorists in explaining decision-making resulted in a schism: the emergence of political pluralism (stabilizing equilibration), and of the "populist reformer." Both of these theories sought to find a way of dealing with the rise of non-political organizations to power—one by vesting political figures with power and representing them as an independent counterforce to the large organization; the other (and there were few of these) by looking to social groups within society which could be harnessed toward modifying the structure which gave rise to the concentration of power. A pessimistic variant is the C. Wright Mills type of analysis focusing on the emergence of a Power Elite and a mass society. The "limited group conflict" theorists then emphasized the role of the conflict of interests and saw society's development as coinciding with this conflict. Socio-economic forces predominated and gave content to the political, which functioned mainly as a referee and score-keeper, watching that the rules of the game were observed and that as the power shifted each increment was scored, i.e., codified, and that the newly begotten equilibrium functioned to continue the game.

The third school of political science, while not denying the importance of equilibrium, nor the functioning of interest groups, is concerned with the importance of traditional political institutions and with the role of the politician as the central figure in the political system. The statesman or the political broker are two descriptions of the central role of the politician as the pivotal figure in issue-resolution in the society. This "traditional" approach is what we shall refer to as the ideology of the "political autonomists," and the writer whom we shall consider is Mathews.¹⁷ Though Mathews mentions that the senator-lobby relation is "two-way," he goes on to say that the prime function of lobbying is "to reinforce convinced senators,"¹⁸ to make them more active; hence, the "convinced senator" is the autonomous actor, and the socio-economical forces outside merely add to his conviction. Mathews comments further that ". . . much lobbying is not perceived as pressure by senators. . . ." The legislator has much more maneuverability than he is given credit for. Mathews does recognize that the senator is influenced by his constituents, party, lobby, etc., but the point is that within fairly broad limits the senator (or, for the purposes of more general analysis, "the politician") can decide political affairs. "Up to some point, the

¹⁷ D. Mathews, *U.S. Senators and Their World* (Chapel Hill, 1960).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

senators are free to choose which groups and interests within their formal constituency they will champion." Within the institutional political sphere Mathews agrees with David Truman "that . . . the 'real' leaders of the Senate are for the most part those in positions of formal authority."¹⁹ Mathews then points to the importance of the committee chairmen and party leaders as the most effective groupings. The central concern of Mathews is with the question of political leadership and the institutional conditions most conducive to bringing about "legislative effectiveness." As a "political autonomist" the quality of the Congressmen, the ability of the internal organization of the Senate to generate the "needed" legislation and the influence of the "folkways of the Senate" in providing a means of developing the requisite skills are emphasized as major foci. In fact, the "folkways of the Senate" are seen as positive influences and their maintenance is perceived as a natural ally to the effective functioning of the Senate: "Senators who conform to the folkways of the Senate are the most influential and effective."²⁰ However, the fact is, we may note, that in being "effective" the liberal is faced with the dilemma of sacrificing his constituents.

The fourth ideological school of politics, "infrastructuralism," focuses on parties²¹ and on their roles as directors, organizers, and decision leaders as being the crucial area for political concern. This school is interested in "more responsible government," in increasing meaningful popular participation and in raising issues for discussion. The issue of "party reform" as the basis for popular participation and clarifying issues is tied to a concern with the problem of "a responsible two-party system." Their concern is to make the political system accountable to the electorate, and to challenge the organized irresponsibility which is generated by diffuse organization, useless politics, and low interest. Thus, unlike the equilibrists who see (or fail to see, as the case may be) these factors as permitting "the system" to operate, the infrastructuralists perceive these as dangers to the democratic polity and find the solution in the party system. For the infrastructuralists, party organization is both the direct link between the electorate, the issues and leaders, and the means of devising a new type of politics, "responsible politics." The question of who will make the readjustments for what purposes is answered by the infrastructuralists by pointing to political and other elites:

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 253. ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

²¹ American Political Science Association, *Toward a More Responsible Two Party System*, Vol. XLIV (1950).

by appealing to "influential parts of the public as well as by political leaders and party officials." ²² The main feature of these ideologists is their stress on organization and their awareness of the organizational details necessary for party reform. A good indication of this is the multitude of detailed proposals that they suggest. This blueprinting of organizational details is accompanied by the absence of any realistic discussion of the social forces willing and able to reform the parties, in addition to the absence of a discussion as to what substantive policies the parties will be responsible for.

THE POLITICAL IDEOLOGIST'S VIEW OF SOCIETY

The ideologies of political scientists reflect not only a specific focus (on institutions, groups, and structures) but develop these within a certain general view of society. Certain assumptions about social and economic organization are made and the social and economic structures are explicitly or implicitly present as the milieu in which the main characters in each political ideology act.

The equilibrals see a "pluralist society." While political elites rule, and the rules are derived from tradition, i.e., constitution, the society over which elite-tradition governs is made up of a diversity of groups, each with its own resources (economic, social, or political, i.e., the power of numbers). Each group is perceived as reflecting in aggregate the general equality of society. A statement by arch-equiberal Parsons brings out the pluralist assumptions in addition to the automatic built-in problem-solving devices which are assumed to follow. Of course, the all-purpose "balance" is also mentioned. "The findings of voting clearly indicate that the American two-party system is a mechanism by which, at any given time, a relative equilibrating balance in a pluralistic society is maintained, so that conflicts and divisive tendencies are controlled and more or less fully resolved." ²³ Perhaps the best expositor among the equilibrals, of the elite-pluralist combination of ideas, is Robert Dahl. He rationalizes elite rule by emphasizing that "prevailing norms are subtle matters better obtained by negotiation than by the crudities and over-simplification of public debate." ²⁴ The theory of balance is rooted in the "pluralist" conception of society, there being more or less equal

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13. ²³ Parsons, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

²⁴ Dahl, *Who Governs?*, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

and diverse forces in society representing the general interests of sectors of society, i.e., labor unions and business, farmers and business. But because the populace is politically apathetic,²⁵ leadership in this pluralistic society is not lacking as political elites are able to make policy beneficial to all the community. For the equilibrals, these low interest attitudes are a buffer against mass movements and non-institutionalized social forces.

Almond, like the earlier German conservative idealists, dwells on community beyond politics, "a sense of community over and above political decisions,"²⁶ as the best safeguard against the involvement of the ordinary citizen in mass movements. The threat, as Kornhauser put it, lies in the "availability" of the ordinary citizen for involvement in unstabilizing mass movements.²⁷ The undemocratic implications of this theory of politics are clear and logical. When the competition is considered by the elite "too threatening" it becomes "unlikely that the incumbents would allow a peaceful competition for elite position."²⁸ Dahl also discusses how political "deviants" are excluded by the elite, thus attempting to prevent the situation from reaching the point where the Almondian "threat" becomes visible. The point here is that the equilibrals conceive of American society as socially and economically pluralistic²⁹ and as generating political elites, both pluralist society and pluralist elites acting in such a way as to resolve society's problems. In this situation mass movements are viewed as the major danger, representing irrational forces which have crept in for non-objective reasons and which threaten to disrupt a rational and free society. The equilibrals present a composite picture of a vacuous politics for the citizen³⁰ on the one hand, and a rational and responsible elite protecting democracy against the threat of mass politics on the other. In the closing sec-

²⁵ Dahl, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-322; Almond and Verba, pp. 490-491; and Berelson, *et al.*, ch. 14.

²⁶ Almond and Verba, p. 490.

²⁷ William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society* (Glencoe, 1959).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 491.

²⁹ John Galbraith indicates the interdisciplinary interlocking of the equilibrals by contributing two books providing the economic arguments for the ideology: *The Affluent Society* (Boston, 1960); *American Capitalism: The Concept of Countervailing Power* (Boston, 1952).

³⁰ Sheldon Wolin, (from lecture notes, University of California at Berkeley, 1963); see also, Henry Kariel, *The Decline of American Pluralism* (Stanford, 1961).

tion of this paper we will deal more with the distinct features of this theory.

As was mentioned earlier, the traditional group theorists, confronted with the growth of large-scale organization and the centralization of power, split into two groups: the "pluralist-group" theorists such as Truman, and what we shall call the "populist-reform" group theorists like McConnell. For Truman, group conflict, while still present in society, was eclipsed by group accommodation. Bargaining between large and small interests was one of the prime factors. The "groups" of the "pluralist-group" theorists like Truman were merged into the balancing forces one finds in the equiliberal analysis, with a greater stress on consensus and equilibrium undercutting the old group theory at a vulnerable point: The conflict basis of society. Rothman neatly summarized the much milder approach of Truman: "The 'socio-political' proposition states that society should be conceived of simply as a plurality of groups interacting with each other, and that the political process is essentially a process of group competition for power over the allocation of resources."³¹

An important new emphasis appears in group theory which makes it akin to the equiliberal analysis: the concept of equilibrium. While earlier society was conflict-gearred, and hence group theory was oriented in this direction, the pluralist group theorists see a "stable" society coming into being. Consequently, Truman's second major concept, equilibrium, is defined and cast in a way which permits him to be part of the "group" tradition, and to make necessary adjustments for a much more limited view of conflict. He defines equilibrium as a state which is reached when patterns of interaction are characterized by a relatively high degree of stability.³² It is obvious that Truman considers United States politics as in or around that state.³³ For the pluralist group theorists, rationality and rational self-interest become identified with narrowly defined economic issues. The "real" interest of a group therefore lies in striving rationally to attain limited ends within the confines of the system. Hence, ideological movements are viewed not only as ineffective (or dysfunctional to the system), but positively irrational and "unreal." Truman, in modified form, can thus be said to be in the "positivist tradition." To

³¹ S. Rothman, "Systematic Political Theory: Observation on the Group Approach," *A.P.S.R.*, Vol. LIV (1960), p. 18.

³² David Truman, *The Governmental Process*, *op. cit.* ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

paraphrase and coin a new phrase: each pursuing his own interest within the limits of the system attains the goods of society.

The other offshoot that shows the influence of the earlier group theory, the "populist-reformer ideology," is best exemplified by Grant McConnell.³⁴ His emphasis is on vertical conflict between groups in a framework of general socio-economic structural conflict. The answer that McConnell gives to the decline of "organized group" conflict is class conflict.³⁵ Large-scale organization instead of the organized pressure group became the center of focus. In considering the four (rather broad) variables of organization, government, social class and economic interest, McConnell, though he is concerned with the specific area of the agricultural sector of American society, indicates how a large-scale class organization, the American Farm Bureau, with the active support of government, and with early business subsidies, grew to dominate legislation and to wield significant political power.³⁶ McConnell discussed the relationship of the American Farm Bureau to the Government in these terms: "Here in fact are alternative and rival forms of political power. The one is a power structure narrowly based on a class of minimum exclusiveness extending through all levels of formal government. The other is a political party broadly based on a loose and shifting alliance of diverse elements . . . the periods of greatest membership gain have coincided with the periods of the greatest intervention of government in agricultural affairs." With McConnell the dominant variable is the large-scale organization directly linked with government on every level and based on upper socio-economic groups. As the title of his book indicates,* McConnell views large-scale organizations with a narrow constituency as determining policies for its own narrow interests at the expense of the lower socio-economic groups (though rationalizing this in terms of a broader constituency, i.e., Agriculture). Also, the emergence of a large-scale organization caused the elimination or crippling of rival organizations representative of other (lower) socio-economic constituencies. This development undermined the channels of communication, participation, and representation—and thus, ultimately threatened democracy. If the "decline of Agrarian democracy" is one side of the coin, the "growth of Agro-business bureaucracy" is the other.³⁷

³⁴ Grant McConnell, *op. cit.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, ch. 1.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 64 and 79–80.

* See source note, p. 76.

³⁷ For further discussion see Henry Kariel, *The Decline of American Pluralism*, *op. cit.*, ch. 2–8.

The third school, the "political autonomists," presents both the most difficult and the easiest problems. Since they view the political sphere as autonomous, and the politician and political institution as relatively independent agents, they feel very little need to discuss society or the relationships between society and political institutions in any detailed fashion. It would seem that given the slight role which class or group pressures play and the emphasis placed on the direct relation between constituents and politicians, an implicit assumption is made that a relatively evenly balanced society exists, in which urban and rural influences operate to shape a broad "pluralist" framework. Thus, the politician can weigh the impact each issue will have on the multitude of groups in his constituency and decide which are more likely to hurt or help his chances when he makes a decision. It would seem then that the pluralist view underlies the political autonomist position. Indirectly one can infer that an element of "elitism" is present in this viewpoint as most Congressmen, or at least Senators, come from the upper socio-economic group and selection is through a screening process: "The merits of those who aspire to the office are pretested in a rough and ready (and not entirely equitable) way by the necessity for a fairly distinguished career, either in or out of politics."³⁸

The infrastructuralists view society as made up of a tremendous number of diverse associations and interests. Schattschneider mentions a "staggering complex of interests," and again a "multiplicity of interests that is somewhat astronomical in character and proportions."³⁹ He goes on to characterize the growth of voluntary organizations and societies as "one of the prime social phenomena of this age."⁴⁰ Schattschneider cites such "interests" as the family, ethnic organizations, religious associations, rural and urban interests, labor and business associations, plus many other interests. For the infrastructuralists this "luxuriance of societies" becomes the "principal distinguishing mark of a democratic regime." The problems generated by this pluralist society are related to the fact that in the past the enormous volume of demands generated by the clamor of organized interests could be neutralized by "giving all the claimants something." In the present period the "demand can be expanded more rapidly than the supply," and "hence the requirement to exclude some and include others," the need to "discriminate

³⁸ Mathews, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

³⁹ E. Schattschneider, *Party Government* (New York, 1942), p. 19.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 21.

among demands" comes to the foreground.⁴¹ Government is perceived as a dispenser of goods and services to the special interests. Public policy is seen as the sum of the demands of the organized special interests, and the greatness of the United States in the past was in its ability to meet the demands made upon it. With the depression and the resultant "scarcity" outlook, with the World War and the heightened involvement in problems of national mobilization and, more important, with the increase in the demands of the mass of the people, the demand for managing and discriminating among the interests was paralleled by the demand for a centralized party system. The danger that the infrastructuralists perceived in United States society was the "disintegration at the hands of the local and special interests now organized to resist the establishment of party government. . . ." ⁴² Without a centralized party structure the infrastructuralists feared anarchy, and argued that the mismanagement of national interests (as opposed to "special interests") by pressure groups would lead to the weakening of the nation. The problem for the infrastructuralist was "the management of interests." The reform program included: "The mobilization of majorities in recognition of the great public interests, the integration of special interests with public policy, and the over-all management and planning involved in discriminating among special interests." It was the inability of the present party system to mobilize majorities (or, to state it in another way, the tendency to disperse and fragment the electorate), the inability of the parties to formulate a public policy because of their dependence on special interests, and their inability to discriminate among interests because of their commitment to certain types of interests which led the infrastructuralists to seek party reform, a "centralized party" which could overcome these limitations. The infrastructuralists, then, basing their analysis on a view of American society which was pluralistic to the extreme, defining the problem as one of organizing the parts for the good of the whole (managing the "interests" to attain a public policy), advocated the ideology of party centralization as the means to maintain internal integration and external power.

CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

We shall now turn our attention to three aspects of the aforementioned ideological schools: the differences among the schools; the

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28. ⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 207.

similarities and common values found among the writers and a critique of certain key concepts which are central to the ideologies. This will be followed by an interpretation of the inadequacies of these viewpoints, from the position of both political theory and democratic thought.

Many of the differences found among the political scientists stem from their different frames of reference and methods of analysis: among the equilibrals Dahl focuses on the "decision process" and the political stratum; Berelson focuses on the voting decision and the voter; group theorists focus on groups, etc. Hence one of the major differences among the political scientists is over method, tactics and research techniques as to the operation and functioning of the system. Moreover, the equilibrals are more concerned with the patterns of stability ("statics"), while the group theorists focus on limited conflict ("dynamics"), the political autonomists on the rules of traditional political institutions ("folklore" of the Senate), and the infrastructuralists are concerned with "orderliness," especially in the political sphere.

To some degree these differences are related to the different forms in which their discussion is presented: the equilibrals valuing stability construct self-contained systems, mechanical models, which minimize change and generate their own replacement parts (and then only slowly). Group theorists valuing conflict are less concerned with the over-all system of analysis, and more with the particular groups and issues that are involved in limited conflict. The infrastructuralists valuing "order" focus on neither "the interests" nor "the system," but on the party and political intermediaries, and hence on the disorderliness caused by the interests to the system. The various schools also differ on the importance assigned to the varying political actors. The equilibrals and autonomists stress the importance of the political elites, while the group theorists and infrastructuralists find socio-economic interests playing a leading role. Perhaps disagreement over what is political is the most important difference between the equilibrals and the autonomists on the one hand, and the group conflict theorists and infrastructuralists on the other. The first group tends to delimit politics from other areas of society (social structure and economy) by defining as political those issues which are explicitly handled by the formal political institutions. The second group gives a broader view to the political and includes all those areas and issues where groups, social and economic, engage in issue resolution and the struggle for power. It would seem that the closer one is to "society" and the further from political institutions, the greater

the emphasis on conflict and group disharmony. To the extent that social conflict and group disharmony are filtered through the political process, somehow the analysis and/or the political sphere "loses" these elements. This would seem to lead to the idea that the political is not completely "congruent" with society at large since by focusing on one or the other one derives a different view of how "politics" functions.

These differences among the schools, however, are subsumed under a set of common assumptions about American politics which limit the debate and, in a sense, overwhelm it. With the possible exception of the populist-reform wing of the group conflict theorists, all the ideologists accept the social-economic institutional structure and theorize on the basis of it. The values basic to it and the formal political structure associated with it are defined as democratic. Which political actors make it so differs from theorist to theorist (see above). The main concentration of the political ideologists in drawing up their theories of democratic politics is derived from and is located in the "ongoing system." With the exception of the infrastructuralists, even the intermediary political structures are part of the commonly accepted values which shape their theory of what politics should be like.

The second basic element of practically all political science ideologists (with the possible exception of the populist-reformers) is their concern with equilibrium and the preservation of the dominant institutions, elites, and interests of society. This is most evident in the following problem: whenever democratic theory comes into conflict with contemporary reality, the theory is discarded, modified, or adjusted to fit the requirements of the system. In other words, the values of the scientists are derived from the functioning of contemporary institutions. This value assessment is frequently obscured by the "objectivist" stance of "functional requirements." The common assumption of the on-going institutions, then, parallels the derivation of political values from the activities and requirements of those institutions, and these two factors underlie the virtual unanimity which forms the base for the dialogue among political scientists. The parameters and, to a large degree, even the content of the discussion are "constant" givens. The problems in systemic functioning and the inconsistencies *within* this discrete number of variables become the focus of analysis.

As a result, a third similarity appears among almost all the political scientists: the absence of discussion of socio-economic issues in politics. Rogow gauged this situation quite correctly when he asked in the *Amer-*

ican Political Science Review, "What happened to the Great Issues?"⁴³ The alienation of politics from society, political debate from social problems, represents a regress (in a much different style) to the earlier formalism of political science, to the study of "government," not "governing." This formalism becomes explicit in the party-reform infrastructuralists when they discuss the need for party reform without reference to socio-economic issues or the social forces which presumably would be interested parties. Rather than centralization *per se*, the real political question is that of whom the party is centralized for, and this refers to the socio-economic structure of society, not to abstractions such as "the public interest."

A related common element is a Hobbesian fear of mass movements, large-scale change and conflict. The great psychological unifying force among the political ideologists is their reverence for the present. Almond, for example, gingerly complains that sufficient deference to the elite is lacking in the United States as compared to England.⁴⁴ Because the political ideologist's conception of "consensus" can overpower "cleavage" when the "issues" of politics are those that the political stratum finds convenient to discuss, "society," where the issues are sharper and less moderate in appearance, is slighted, and its problems are repressed—at least in the minds of the political scientists. The psychic attitude of fear-repression toward "society" and social conflict becomes sublimated into reverence-deference to the political sphere. Society and its wants become the id to be repressed, the government and its laws the super-ego to be respected. And in the midst of this authority fixation creeps the authoritarian principle. In a statement which is both authoritarian and non-specific (like the German State theorists), Almond asserts, "For if democracy means *anything*, it must have the power and leadership to make decisions." Parenthetically, one may note that what remains of democratic theory is some of the language; the substance is completely alien.

The convergence of elitism and formalism, focusing on problems of leadership and organization, binds most of the differing schools of political science from the equilibrals and autonomists through the infra-

⁴³ A. A. Rogow, "What Happened to the Great Issues?", *A.P.S.R.*, Vol. LI (1957), pp. 763, 775. With the Cold War and the rise of repressive institutions the number of populist-reformer type political scientists dwindled to almost zero. Only in the last few years has this approach reappeared among the graduate students and the younger members of the faculty.

⁴⁴ Almond and Verba, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

structuralists and group pluralists. Discussions of leadership⁴⁶ without relating this to *who* leads *whom*, and *for what* in terms of society and social values, become pure "leaderism" or elitism. It is, then, no accident that an equiliberal and elitist such as Almond can agree with an infrastructuralist and formalist such as Schattschneider when the latter writes: "The problem is not how 180 million Aristotles can run a democracy, but how we can organize a community of 180 million ordinary people so that it remains sensitive to their needs. This is a problem of leadership, organization, alternatives, and systems of responsibility and confidence."⁴⁶ It is interesting to note how "community," an abstraction, is "sensitive," but that citizen involvement in a "democracy" (*sic*) is not considered even a problem. The citizens are the material to be "organized" (by the elite "we") in the abstract "community." The common ground of the political ideologists, then, is their reduction of politics to organizational and leadership criteria for functioning in the ongoing system. It is anticlimactic, therefore, to mention the fact that a sidelight to this problem of leadership is the almost universal view among the scientists that the State itself is not committed to any particular group or stratum in society, (or perhaps I might suggest it is *so* committed that it is not questioned) but functions as a "broker" and dispenser of goods to all of society somewhat unequally, but not unjustly (an "unproblem").⁴⁷ The newer schools of social science, however, largely because of the inadequacy of the broker view of the state (and largely due to their commitments in international politics and the Cold War), find themselves searching for equilibrium among the elites rather than in society at large; hence, the focus on leadership and its proper support, organization (i.e., bureaucracy).

These, then, are some of the common assumptions, values, and attitudes which underlie and in a basic way provide the platform on which the aforementioned differences are discussed. This is not to suggest that the differences are not genuine, or that judgments as to the relative merits of different approaches and analytic models cannot be made. What follows are some of our own ideas on the limitations of the ideolo-

⁴⁶ In addition to Almond and Verba, *op. cit.*, and Dahl, *Who Governs?*, see also, Samuel Lubell, *The Future of American Politics* (New York, 1952).

⁴⁷ Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People* (New York, 1960), p. 138; Almond and Verba, *op. cit.*, p. 477.

⁴⁸ The concept of "unproblem" is borrowed from Lewis Feuer, "Problems and Unproblems in Soviet Social Theory," *Slavic Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1 (1964), pp. 117-124.

gies as they relate to political analysis and to political values and as they affect the whole of society and its component parts.

Firstly, it appears to us that the concern of the infrastructuralists like Schattschneider over "the great interests of the nation" is sufficiently vague to allow any and all groups and powerful interests (corporate or military) who identify themselves with the "great interests of the nation" to take the handle of "a strong national party leadership supported by a well-mobilized majority" and to cause havoc on the country and/or significant numbers of relatively less organized groups. The danger or advantage of a "centralized party" depends less on its inherent goodness or its managerial skills or its ability to bring about order, and more upon the social class which directs it and the kind of socio-political program which guides the organization. The infrastructuralists set the organizational before the political, and hence, quite irresponsibly, assume that organizational reform will solve society's problems. Instead, it only raises the political question: what issues will arise which will require a disciplined party? Or more fundamentally: what social forces, finding the present party structure incapable of meeting its needs, will be forced to seek party reform?

It should be noted that under present circumstances, the onesided emphasis on the organized aspect of politics is likely to lead to the formal incorporation of the better organized interests into the government (the government bureaucracy at that) under the guise that they are merely performing an "organizational function"; and in the process of selecting out and distributing goods and services, the added weight of the governmental apparatus to their own bias will surely weigh heavier on the side of an unjust distribution.

While the limited conflict group theorists do consider politics in the context of society, they do so in an overly limited manner which inhibits the scope of their analysis, with the result that their approach is not inclusive enough to account for major changes in the society. Rothman points out the omission by group theorists of changes in the mode of production and in the system of productive relationships in their interpretations of shifts in interests and attitudes. The view of society as a mere "plurality of groups" and of policy as the result of their interaction overlooks the essential role played by change in socio-economic structure and ideology in determining the kinds of issues that are generated, who the political actors will be, and indeed, as Hartz has pointed out, the kind of polity which gives group theory some plausibility. The dis-

embodiment of "groups" from the social-economic structure and "interests" from the motive force of institutions gives a short-run and superficial explanation of the behavior of socio-economic forces in society. Historic interests of institutions which are not subject to numerous fluctuations but utilize differing tactics and strategy (depending on the situation) are incomprehensible because of the "narrow scope" of analysis both spatially and temporally. In this sense, group theorists are researchers of political tactics of limited political forces. The limited group conflict approach, by dealing with the formally organized interest group, cannot account for structural changes, since structure and institutions are not considered part of the group analysis. Hence, in societies where political and social movements emerge which demand something beyond narrowly defined economic benefits (higher wages), the group theorist lacks a frame of reference, because the institutional structure of society (the target of insurgents) at any given moment is said to be in equilibrium (i.e., part of the assumptions of the group theorist). As Rothman pointed out in regard to Truman's analysis of economic interest groups as they pursued their self-interest within certain well defined parameters, he missed the crucial question: "Why indeed do they limit themselves to these parameters?"

The marginality of conflict in the pluralist group theory revolves around the fact that displacement or defeat of groups is not decisive for the continuation of the social structure or major institutions; hence "struggle" of groups takes place, but it is not related to modification or the replacement of the system. The societal problems remain or recur as the "groups" emerge or subside. One can, thus, superficially accept the Marxist emphasis on struggle and the importance of socio-economic forces; but by identifying these only with formally organized interest groups apart from the institutional configuration of the society one does not have to face the problem of structural change in order to solve societal problems. All one needs to do is . . . form a group. What Bachrach and Baratz⁴⁸ pointed out to Dahl and the equilibrals in their approach to the study of power is equally appropriate to the group theorists. In order to study power one must: (a) look at the particular "mobilization of bias" in the institutions under scrutiny (including analysis of the dominant ideology, myths, the established political procedures and the rules of the game); (b) locate which persons or groups

⁴⁸ Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," *A.P.S.R.*, Vol. LVI (1962), p. 952.

benefit from the bias and which, if any, are handicapped by it; (c) investigate the "dynamics of non-decision making," the extent to which and the manner in which the status-quo oriented persons and groups influence those community values and those political institutions which tend to limit the scope of actual decision-making to "safe issues";⁴⁹ (d) finally, using knowledge of the restrictive face of power as a foundation for analysis and as a standard for distinguishing between "key" and "routine" political decisions, one must analyze participation in decision-making of concrete issues.

The notions of "equilibrium" and "balance," perhaps more than any other, have distorted the perception of political scientists. The real political question begins, not ends, when one mentions "balance"; balance of power in whose favor? As Mills noted, "'Balance of power' implies equality of power and equality of power seems wholly fair and even honorable, but in fact, what is one man's honorable balance is often another's unfair balance. Ascendant groups of course tend readily to proclaim a just balance of power and a true harmony of interests, for they prefer their domination to be uninterrupted and peaceful."⁵⁰ In fact, the "balances" are so drawn as to cover up essential imbalances that exist in society among social classes, races, and sectors of the country: the imbalances caused by the "economically determined class lines" in American society where, as Kolko notes: "On the one hand, nearly one-half of the population is financially able to meet only its immediate physical needs, and the larger part of the group, nearly one-third of the nation, are in want of even basic necessities. On the other hand, a small section of the population, at most, the top tenth, lives in the prosperous and frequently sumptuous manner that most social commentators ascribe to the large majority of Americans";⁵¹ the "imbalances" caused by racial discrimination and segregation and the resultant imbalances in society as illustrated by the disparity between Negro ghettos and white suburbs, an unemployment rate which is more than twice as high among

⁴⁹ To the extent that political scientists like Dahl confine themselves to defining as political what the dominant political stratum deems it advisable to consider "significant issues" he is a "propagandist of the fact," (Merton's term altered slightly), and his method of studying only these issues is an ideological cover for this political stratum since he agrees with their definition of the relevant political issues. Problems engendered in the society and not considered by the elite are for Dahl "unproblems"—they do not exist to be considered.

⁵⁰ C. W. Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York, 1956), pp. 246-47; see also, ch. 11, "The Theory of Balance."

⁵¹ G. Kolko, *Wealth and Power in America* (New York, 1962), p. 128.

Negroes as whites, etc. (A further variation on the same theme is provided by E. V. Essien-Udom in his discussion of the bifurcation of the Negro caste: ". . . the emergence of a Negro middle class may have serious consequences for the Negro masses, creating an 'imbalance' within the Negro community.")⁵² Imbalances are created by the malfunctioning of the economic system where productive facilities are unused, where demand (popular needs) is seriously curtailed and where unemployment includes at least six per cent of the labor force; imbalance exists between expansion in some areas of the country and the absolute decline and impoverishment of others (for example, the Appalachian area). This is far from a complete list, but it includes major societal data that must be explained. These disequilibria generate conflict, challenge existing society, present problems to the system, generate issues and even, at this point, creep into the major political arenas. By the equilibrals' very commitment to the values of stability and system maintenance, these problems and issues are minimized or repressed. Their "deductive pluralism"⁵³ prevents the equilibrals from seeing the undemocratic features of the society, the lack of responsiveness of institutions and practices to societal need. Hypotheses such as "democracy" become untenable; they are made to do the work and provide the emotive labels for activities which do not correspond to the "appropriate" reality. What Lewis Feuer once wrote about the Keynesians (the economic equilibrals) is equally applicable to the political equilibrals: "Confronted by evidence of cumulative disequilibrium, it (Keynesian economics) has sought to alter the meaning of equilibrium so as to make it compatible with the existence of unemployment or more generally with the partial use of the factors of production. Situations are said to be in equilibrium which would conform to operational criteria of disequilibrium."⁵⁴ The failure of institutions to function as they are supposed to is obscured by the redefinition of concepts and the repression of issues and problems. The imbalances mentioned above become "unproblems" as they do not fall within the purview of the analytic concepts; or only a small aspect of an imbalance is caught and presented as a marginal phenomenon. Feuer pointed out the hollow formalism and tautological nature of the equilibrium model: "The values of marginal increments of

⁵² E. V. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism* (Chicago, 1963), p. 355, *passim*.

⁵³ Michael Rogin, (from lecture notes, University of California at Berkeley, 1964).

⁵⁴ Lewis Feuer, "Dialectics and Economic Laws," *Science & Society*, Vol. V, No. 4 (1941), p. 358.

different lines of conduct are stipulated to be equal; a formal pattern may then be applied to the observed behavior. The individual activities may be inconsistent with each other or they may not conform to any usual ends; but whatever they are, their marginal values shall be deemed equal. Such a theory of 'balance' contains no content of its own, but simply provides a formula into which any set of data may be fitted." ⁵⁵

The "balances" of the equilibrals are at best one-sided explanations of limited areas of society; this one-sidedness fails to account for the issues and problems, the elements of disequilibria which present the problems of politics, the areas of issue gestation, the substance of political life.

The implications of equilibrational thought, however, are much more profound than simply a misperception of reality. What they have in effect done is to redefine the concept of democracy to fit the institutional demands of the present system. Basic to this has been their confusion of the terms democracy and stability. The two are assumed to be synonymous: if the system is stable it also must be democratic. This confusion of values makes clear the meaning of the attack (by the equilibrals) on the "rationalist-activist" model of democracy. Almond, Dahl, and their disciples make a virtue of the absence of the democratic citizen in terms of "the system" which they still assume is "democratic." The attitudes of the population are analyzed in terms of their stabilizing effects upon these situations. Hence, the stabilizing of the status quo is identified with democracy. The paradoxical consequence is a society billed as the paradigm of democracy but with a minimum of democratic citizens.

Only by maintaining an open-ended view of the final outcome of a society where both democratic forces and undemocratic conditions uneasily coexist can one avoid the error of the dogmatic "deductive pluralists"; for implicit in each imbalance is both a possible narrowing (and eventual solution) of a problem or its magnification and extension to other areas. To assume automatic solutions to the profound imbalances existing in contemporary society is not only to be ahistorical, but to misread the newspaper accounts of the struggles and conflicts now going on in American society, e.g., the civil rights revolution. With this in mind, one is perhaps best equipped to analyze society with a conflict or disequilibrium model (as does the populist reformer, McConnell). This does not require the repression of integrative factors, but rather their inclusion in the larger perspective. Feuer noted that, "Although a society

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

may be in a state of general equilibrium in a 'static' sense, its state may nevertheless be located at some point in a secular trend toward disequilibrium."⁵⁶ The value of this approach would be that by focusing on social conflict and social change, one would be better able to predict the issues as they emerge from social life to the political sphere and better able to refer to the socio-political variations which are dependent on the institutional framework within which they are initiated. One should recall that political science is a branch of social science because laws of politics are, in this sense, a function of social institutions.

In summary one can agree with Dwight Waldo's assertions that "American political scientists have tended to accept the 'political order,' and that "distinctive American 'political theory' has tended to be concerned with means and methodology."⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

⁵⁷ Dwight Waldo, *Political Science in the United States: A Trend Report* (Paris, 1956), p. 17.

Shin'ya Ono

The Limits of Bourgeois Pluralism

I. INTRODUCTION

Young American radicals often speak of "grassroots democracy" as their ideal, and analyze the political reality that restricts and obstructs the realization of that ideal in terms of "power structure," "elitism," or even "ruling class." Implicit in this is, first, an image of democracy which is not new, but classical. Also implicit in their mode of political perception is a model of the existing structure of power that traces its origin in the works of C. Wright Mills and perhaps even in those of Marx and Lenin—in other words, some model of a Ruling Elite (to use Robert A. Dahl's terminology.)

In the present American society, however, there prevails a model of democracy and the structure of power, which we may call the theory of bourgeois pluralism. Its proponents claim that their theory has transcended the limitations of the classical model of democracy, that the pluralist model is more adequate and realistic, and that it has refuted the models of Ruling Elite. If, therefore, radicals are to be able to offer an intelligent defense of both their model of democracy, and their general conception of the existing structure of power, they must understand why they reject the prevailing pluralist model. Otherwise their analyses and objectives are likely to degenerate into a set of cliches, and they will thereby allow their opponents, and those who are indifferent, to dismiss them as a group of political illiterates.

SOURCE: *Studies on the Left*, V, 3 (1965), 46–72. Reprinted with permission. Shin'ya Ono is a Ph.D. candidate in political theory at Columbia University.

The theories of bourgeois pluralism developed by Robert A. Dahl, David Truman, William Kornhauser, and Suzanne Keller¹ today constitute a predominant model by which many politically conscious men in American society perceive and interpret the meanings of social and political process. Their theory is a very ingenious one in so far as it seems successfully to reconcile the ideal of liberty with the reality of a dichotomy between elites and masses; in comparison to the classical models of democracy, the model appears to be hard-headed and realistic to the extent that it takes into account social heterogeneity, group conflicts, divergent norms and modes of perception, and other sociological concomitants of modern industrial society. In Dahl's work, particularly, the model is worked out with an analytical rigor and methodological awareness unmatched by his critics.

In this essay, then, I shall first present a schematic, composite model of bourgeois pluralism chiefly based on the works of Dahl and Truman (with some illustrative material from those of Kornhauser and Keller); I shall then criticize some of its central presuppositions (mostly on methodological grounds); and in doing so, I shall state a few preliminary suggestions regarding the requirements for constructing an alternative theory of political process in American society.

II. THE PLURALIST THEORY OF BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY

(The presentation that follows is admittedly a schematic and oversimplified one; and as such it does not do justice to the subtleties and complexities of Truman's and Dahl's analyses. To the extent that such a brief, schematic description serves to clarify the central weaknesses and deficiencies buried under the subtleties and qualifications, however, I believe my method is justified.)

¹ The relevant works are: Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1956); *Who Governs?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961); *Modern Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963); "A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. LII (March 1958), pp. 463-469. David B. Truman, *The Governmental Process* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962); "The Politics of New Collectivism," an unpublished article available at the Columbia University Library. William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society* (The Free Press of Glencoe, 1959); "'Power Elite' or 'Veto Groups'?" in Seymour Martin Lipset and Leo Lowenthal (ed.), *Culture and Social Structure: The Works of David Riesman Reviewed* (The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), pp. 252-267. Suzanne Keller, *Beyond the Ruling Class* (New York: Random House, 1963).

The starting point of this theory, as for any other political theory, is its distinctive concept of man. Man, we are told, is born into a set of more or less stable patterns of social relationship or groups. These patterns of human interaction entail a differential access to the fruits of common cultural heritage, a differential distribution of burdens and benefits, as well as definite relations of authority. As a human organism, a child is born with a "primordial quest for gratifications and release from pain." "The child and youth learn various forms of gratifying experience"; they learn of love and food; of play, work, and rest; sex, friendship, and self-esteem, etc.² These represent his "hungers, his needs, his wants." But he cannot satisfy these primary needs any way he likes to. For, while he learns these forms of gratifying experience, he at the same time is taught to perceive "order and pattern" in his social relationships and to more or less accept them. He soon discovers "that other persons constrain him" in his efforts to achieve satisfaction of his needs. Gradually, therefore, he sets out to acquire resources that he can use to influence others to gain his own ends.³ Thus, for example, he can use various qualities and powers of his personality ("affection, friendliness, anger, hostility"), money, schooling, knowledge, job, friendship and friends, social status, etc., to attain his goals (that is, the satisfaction of his primary needs). These resources are instrumental in inducing others to comply with his demands and claims.⁴ All this he seeks to do within and through the various groups and patterns of social interaction that surround and shape him as a person.

Now, as long as there exists no wide and immediately perceptible discrepancy between his expectations and the actual functioning of these groups and social relationships, a certain "equilibrium" obtains both for the individual and the groups in question. If and when, however, the groups and social relationships do not function in accordance with the individual's expectations and fail to satisfy his primary needs, then the individual's and the groups' equilibrium is disturbed. The individual will therefore seek either to restore the old equilibrium, or to establish a new one.⁵ The means for achieving an equilibrium are various. The selection of a particular means is a function of many variables, some of which are the following: the nature of the disturbance in question; the individual's perception of the nature and the cause of the disturbance; availability of alternative solution; the individual's expectations concerning the efficacy

² Dahl, *Who Governs?*, p. 223. ³ *Ibid.* ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

⁵ Truman, *The Governmental Process*, p. 104.

of the alternative channels of effort, etc.⁶ The individual in question engages in a kind of "marginal calculation" of the probable costs against the probable gains involved in the alternative solutions, and then makes his choice.

When he clearly perceives the actions or inactions of governments as the major cause threatening his primary needs, and when he sees no other alternative or when he has a high sense of political efficacy, then and only then does he "set out deliberately to use his resources in order to influence the actions of governments." "But when the danger passes, *homo civicus* may usually be counted upon to revert to his normal pre-occupation with non-political strategies for attaining his primary goals." (*Homo civicus* is not, by nature, a political man.⁷) Such is the concept of man held by the bourgeois theory of pluralism.

When men attempt to achieve the desired "equilibrium" by political means, they tend to do so through the groups of which they are members. For men perceive and experience social reality in groups, rather than as individuals. Now, when any group, "on the basis of shared attitudes, makes certain claims upon society for the establishment, maintenance, or enhancement of forms of behavior that are implied by the shared attitudes," it acts as a political interest group. Man's specialized experience and selective perception are inevitable in modern society. Racial, ethnic, religious, geographical, educational, occupational, economic, and numerous other differences can become the structural determinants of different interest groups. Indeed, in the United States today, there exist numerous interest groups based on such specialized group experiences. The reason for this is not difficult to find. In a modern industrial society, many of the disturbances tend to be beyond the control of individuals and private groups. Thus, increasingly, the groups faced with major problems tend to gravitate toward government.⁸ Politics, then, is essentially a series of conflicts among different interest groups, each of which attempts to impose its own demands and claims upon society through the state and other channels. And political conflict, in turn, is seen as the inevitable consequences of men's specialized experiences and selective perception.⁹

Granted the overwhelming importance of interest groups, what implications do they have for liberal democratic politics? In order to

⁶ Dahl, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Truman, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 503.

answer this question, we are told to take cognizance of the following: 1. the formation of interest groups tends to occur in a "wave-like" fashion. That is, when the influence of some groups become salient, and thereby disturbs the existing "equilibrium," rival groups are likely to be organized in opposition to them, so as to "countervail" against the influence of the former.¹⁰ 2. The membership of most groups tend to have multiple, and often conflicting, affiliations. For this reason, the control and influence of various groups over their members tend to be non-inclusive, and the conflicts among different groups will be non-violent. 3. The broad, general attitudes constitute "potential interest groups" that will be activated if and whenever these attitudes are violently and massively violated by some groups or by the government. These broad, general attitudes exercise an effective stabilizing and restraining influence throughout the political system. 4. The internal politics of most interest groups are characterized by "democratic mold" as well as by elite leadership. 5. The various potential resources for political influence are unequally distributed among different interest groups, but the inequalities of these resources are non-cumulative and widely dispersed. In other words, while some groups may be strong in particular resources, other groups are stronger in different kinds of potential factors of political power; no single group comes even close to monopolizing all or even most of the available political resources (*e.g.*, AFL-CIO has an advantage in its ability to mobilize a large number of votes, NAM in its economic power, AMA in the high social status of its membership, the Catholic Church in its organizational and spiritual influence, etc.). 6. The formal structure of the American political system is characterized by universal suffrage, free election, organizational freedoms, and multiplicity of coordinate points of access to key points of decision within the governmental structure.

With these considerations in mind, let us examine the implication of interest groups for democratic politics.

According to the pluralists, the most significant function of the interest groups is that they afford political elites and the masses the opportunity to influence and control each other in concrete, constructive ways, rather than in abstract and destructive ways. The mostly apathetic masses can exercise their indirect control over the nomination and election of the elites within their own organizations, and within the state as a

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

whole. (Direct, "active" interference by the masses in politics is held to be undesirable.) The masses can learn the art of "responsible self-government" with leadership by participating in these voluntary, intermediate groups. They can better perceive social reality and relate themselves to the social and political structure concretely and constructively through these organizations. Since no group exercises an inclusive, total control over its members, the masses can maintain their personal autonomy, and check the conduct and policies of the elites. The political elites for their part benefit as well, because they are free from direct intervention from the masses in taking initiatives, in formulating programmes, and in executing policies. In other words, they can contain "fantasy" or "mass" politics.

The heterogeneity and penetrability of the political elites, the open and alternative channels of communication, the dispersion of inequalities in the political resources, and the existence of organizational freedoms, ensure that political competition among the alternative elites and alternative policies (through the medium of free election) will not only give the masses a significant control over their government, but will also enable the political system to fulfill the needs of most groups within the community.¹¹

There are, then, three cornerstones in the pluralist model: 1) the affirmation of the ideal of the autonomous individual, 2) the recognition of the existence of the mass-elite dichotomy, and 3) the reconciliation of the ideal of the autonomous individual and the reality of the mass-elite dichotomy through the mediation of pluralist democracy—with its negative liberty, multiple group affiliation, intermediary groups, and heterogeneity and competition among the elites.

III. A CRITIQUE OF THE PLURALIST MODEL OF THE POWER STRUCTURE

As a general model of politics in American society, the theory just presented cannot be challenged on a purely empirical basis. It is an ingenious theory. To be sure we can point out certain tendencies in American society that seem to contradict its optimistic conclusions, but as long as we remain within the framework of purely "empirical" and

¹¹ In the United States, there exists "a political system in which all the active and legitimate groups in the population can make themselves heard at some crucial stage in the process of decision." Cf. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, pp. 137-138.

"descriptive" analysis, we can never clarify the fundamental limitations of this general conception. As Isaiah Berlin has correctly pointed out, it is "by now a commonplace that the data of observation can be accommodated to almost any theoretical model."¹²

Given this difficulty, one good way of clarifying the limitations of this model may be to trace the important highlights of the recent polemics on the nature of the power structure in the United States; by doing so, we would obtain a clearer understanding of some of the methodological problems involved. Therefore, in the section that follows, I shall briefly examine Mills' critique of the pluralist model, Dahl's criticisms of the alternative model provided by Mills, and then the critique of Dahl's methodological assumptions by Morton Baratz and Peter Bachrach; with this completed, I shall present my own criticisms of the pluralist model.

The most forceful criticism of the pluralist model of the power structure has been made by C. Wright Mills in *The Power Elite*. According to Mills, the pluralist model fails to explain the vague sense of powerlessness perceived by men living in American society; it glosses over the incapacity of most men to relate what they feel and experience in their particular milieu to the decisions and events that takes place on the structural level of the socio-political process. In the pluralist model, the problems raised by the amorphous sense of powerlessness and the difficulty of relating oneself to the social-political process are solved by one's participation in the intermediary organizations. Mills, however, is very skeptical of this solution, on three grounds. First, the majority of the citizens in the United States do not even belong to any voluntary organization large enough to be politically significant. Second, even for those who do belong to such associations (e.g., trade unions, farmers' organizations, various employers' associations, etc.), the fact of their membership in these groups does not enable them to develop anything like a coherent, structural view of the social and political process. (Mills attributes the failure of most intermediate groups to perform the func-

¹² Isaiah Berlin, "Does Political Theory Exist?" in Peter Laslett and W. G. Runciman (ed.), *Philosophy, Politics, and Society*—Second Series (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1962), p. 16. On the fundamental methodological problems relating to the "scientific study of politics," cf. Barrington Moore, Jr., *Political Power and Social Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), chaps. 3 and 4; W. G. Runciman, *Social Science and Political Theory* (Cambridge at the University Press, 1963), chaps. i, vi, and viii, and Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis*, chap. viii.

tion assigned to it by the pluralists, to the bureaucratization of their internal structure, as well as to the elitist character of the leadership.) And third, the pluralist model is grossly misleading because it does not evaluate the position occupied by most of these intermediate groups in the total structure of power. Not that Mills denies the fact of their participation in the process of decision-making; what he asserts is that most of these groups operate on the "middle levels" of power:

We must revise and relocate the received conceptions of an enormous scatter of varied interests, for, when we look closer and for longer periods of time, we find that most of these middle-level interests are concerned with their particular cut, with their particular area of vested interest, and often these are of no decisive political importance, although many are of enormous detrimental value to welfare. Above this plurality of interests, the units of power—economic, political, and military—that count in any balance are few in number and weighty beyond comparison with the dispersed groups on the middle and lower levels of the power structure.¹⁸

These latter groups, which are "few in number and weighty beyond comparison," then, are the constituent elements of the Power Elite who make the "big," or "top-level" decisions that affect the operation of our economy, our chance for survival, the range of limitations on our style of life, etc. The Power Elite, consisting of the corporate community, the military establishment, and the political directorate, is the true governing group in the contemporary American society, homogeneous in "fundamental interests" as well as in general outlook. Both in potential and in actual power, it is not rivaled by any other group in our society. The truth, then, is that the decision-making power is concentrated and centralized in those who head and direct the political, economic, and military institutions. In Mills' view, therefore, the pluralists obscure our perception of social reality when they speak of the power being widely diffused, decentralized, and shared among numerous interest groups, veto-groups, or countervailing powers.

It is apparent that the validity of Mills' critique of the pluralist model rests on certain key differentiating concepts (e.g., the "middle" vs. "top" levels of power; homogeneity of the Power Elite in "fundamental," but not necessarily in "secondary," interests; "fundamental issues" vs. "trivial distractions," etc.). It is equally apparent that these key differentiating concepts cannot be defended on entirely empirical

¹⁸ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 266.

grounds. But unfortunately Mills did not make his normative and methodological stance explicit, nor did he organize his work (*The Power Elite*) in a form appropriate to his critical stance. Consequently, the pluralists wasted little time in "demolishing" Mills' model of the power structure. Dahl's critique¹⁴ is perhaps the most useful one for our present purpose, since the clarity and incisiveness of his ground for criticizing Mills' work enable us better to perceive some of the intricate methodological problems inherent in any discussion concerning the nature of power.

Dahl begins his critique by reminding us that any theory or model of the power structure must be empirically verifiable, if it is to be useful at all. If it is not empirically verifiable, it cannot be considered a scientific theory. This postulate, for example, would exclude from the realm of science and of scholarship "a type of metaphysical theory made up of what might be called an infinite regress of explanation."¹⁵ This demand for empirical verifiability (or what Dahl elsewhere calls an "operational" method) is, as such, quite acceptable. For, no matter what the subjective purpose or interest of the theorist may be, if a theory, or the constituent propositions of a theory, are not empirically verifiable, then, that theory certainly cannot serve as an instrument for explaining, "predicting,"¹⁶ or shaping the events in the real world.

Dahl, then, proceeds to postulate what can be considered the minimum content of the "ruling elite model." Any ruling elite model must postulate the existence of a "controlling group less than a majority in size" . . . whose "preferences" regularly prevail "in cases of differences in preferences on key political issues."¹⁷ In order to demonstrate the validity of this hypothesis about the power structure of a given political system, the following conditions must be shown to obtain in that political system: 1. "The hypothetical ruling elite is a well-defined group." 2. "There is a fair sample of cases involving key political decisions in which the *preferences* of the hypothetical ruling elite run

¹⁴ Dahl, "A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model." See reference above, in note 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 463.

¹⁶ The concept of "prediction" as an aim of the social science is very problematic. Cf. Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), p. 113, ff.; Moore, *op. cit.*, chap. 4; Antonio Gramsci, "Critical Notes on an Attempt at a Popular Presentation of Marxism by Bukharin," in *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1957), p. 95.

¹⁷ Dahl, *op. cit.*, p. 464.

counter to those of any other likely groups that might be suggested.”¹⁸

3. “In such cases, the preferences of the elite regularly prevail.”¹⁹

Only a moment's reflection is required to realize that Mills' work fails to verify the second and third conditions. And, since Mills does not examine the dynamics of the decision-making process with reference to concrete sets of “key issues,” he fails to verify the existence of a homogeneous elite, that is, he fails to verify even the first condition. Dahl's critique, in so far as Mills' work is concerned, therefore, seems lucid and persuasive. However, the methodological assumptions implicit in his critique of Mills' work, as well as in his own pluralist model of the power structure, are far from being entirely unambiguous, as we can see from the critique of Dahl's methodology made by Bachrach and Baratz.²⁰

As Bachrach and Baratz make fully clear, the basic methodological assumption of the pluralist approach is that “power is totally embodied and fully reflected in ‘concrete decisions’ or in activity bearing directly upon their making.”²¹ By making this assumption, the pluralist approach makes itself vulnerable on two accounts: first, the method includes no objective criteria for distinguishing between “key” and routine issues; second, the “model provides no account of the fact that the power may be, and often is, exercised by confining the scope of decision-making to safe issues.”²² To take the second point first; the method used by the pluralists, by concentrating on decisions actually made, fails to analyze (and even fails to recognize as a problem) the power which is exercised when a person or group succeeds in limiting the scope of decision-making by “influencing community values and political procedures and rituals, notwithstanding that there are in the community serious but *latent* power conflicts.”²³

I shall give a specific example: A mayor, in his attempt to find rational solutions to various problems connected with an urban redevelopment project, may exclude a whole range of alternatives because he takes the existing socioeconomic structure as something “given.” This act of excluding a whole range of alternatives need not be a result of political pressures, or of a telephone call from the “downtown mag-

¹⁸ The italics are mine. The problematic nature of the italicized terms, “preference” and “key” should be noted.—[EDITORS' NOTE.]

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 466.

²⁰ Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, “Two Faces of Power,” *The American Political Science Review*, LVI (December 1962), pp. 947–952.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 948. ²² *Ibid.* ²³ *Ibid.*

ates"; indeed, it need not even be a conscious act. That is, he may do this as a matter of course, as something which is a part of the "rules of the game." But can we deny that in this case the downtown magnates have exercised a significant degree of power in the decision-making process, perhaps merely by existing, and certainly by being protected by the "consensus" or the "rules of the game"? To ignore this "silent" and "unseen" aspect of power (that is, of the *structure* of power) is to obscure our perception of political reality, for every political system rests on a specific "mobilization of bias" (embodied in dominant values, political myths, rituals, and institutions) which, while allowing some issues to be "organized into politics," "organizes out" other issues and problems.²⁴

As to the first point, the weakness of the approach adopted by the pluralists is even more transparent; they take what is considered to be significant issues by most people as the "key issues." But that this position begs the whole question raised by Baratz and Bachrach regarding the dynamics of power exercised in "non-decision-making" is immediately apparent.

To overcome these analytical shortcomings of the pluralist approach to power, Baratz and Bachrach propose an alternative method, which the researcher would first study the particular "mobilization of bias" prevalent in the given community, and determine the *differential* impact of that particular "mobilization" on the relative power position of different (actual and potential) groups. That is,

he would make a careful inquiry into which persons or groups, if any, gain from the existing bias and which, if any, are handicapped by it. Next, he would investigate the dynamics of *non-decision-making*; that is, he would examine the extent to which and the manner in which *status quo* oriented persons and groups influence those community values and those political institutions (as *e.g.*, the unanimity "rule" of New York City's Board of Estimate) which tend to limit the scope of actual decision-making to "safe" issues. Finally, using his knowledge of the restrictive face of power as a foundation of analysis and as a standard for distinguishing between "key" and "routine" political decisions, the researcher would, after the manner of the pluralists, analyze the participation in decision-making of concrete issues.²⁵

²⁴ The concept of "mobilization of bias" was first formulated by E. E. Schattschneider in *The Semi-Sovereign People* (New York, 1960), p. 71. Quoted by Bachrach and Baratz, *op. cit.*, p. 949.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 952.

Although there are a number of very formidable methodological problems with the approach adopted by Baratz and Bachrach, it has a great merit of focusing our attention on a conception of power which we may call an "institutional," or "substantive" concept, as distinct from the "interpersonal," or "relational" concept.²⁶ That is, while Dahl and others who adopt the relational approach tend to see and locate power and its dynamics in the interaction processes among the political actors, each of whom has a specific scale of values and social expectations, Baratz and Bachrach see power relations in more or less ossified "mobilization of bias" (embodied in various institutions and the "rules of the game," as well as in political attitudes, values, and myths) which becomes abstracted or reified from the particular processes of personal interaction, and assumes a certain degree of autonomy in determining the behavior of the interacting individuals. The strength of the substantive concept, as Maruyama cogently argues, is that "it seizes on the ineluctable fact that the forms of human behaviour will, by being institutionalized, become separated from mere mutual relations between individuals and become canalized into a definite objective pattern. . . ." ²⁷ To the extent that the relational approach neglects this aspect of the structure of power, "it becomes a sort of 'false consciousness'; and in the sense that it conceals reality, ideological." ²⁸

How, in one sense, the pluralists neglect this aspect of power has been indicated and illustrated by Baratz and Bachrach in their paper. Now, I would like to demonstrate the neglect of this less apparent, but nevertheless important, "face" of power from a slightly different perspective, by examining Dahl's notion of "preference" which is the cornerstone, not only of his critique of Mills, but also of his own pluralist model of the power structure.

In his most brilliant work, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, Dahl makes the following generalizations about the political process in the United States: 1. "Elections are quite ineffective as indicators of majority preference" on specific policy questions.²⁹ 2. On any policy decision, "even a very important one," only "a tiny proportion of the electorate actively [brings] its influence to bear upon politicians." ³⁰

²⁶ Here I am following the distinction made by Professor Maruyama Masao in his very perceptive article, "Some Problems of Political Power," in *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics* (Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 271.

²⁷ *Ibid.* ²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, p. 131. ³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 124.

For example, in an "area as critical as foreign policy, the evidence is inclusive that year in and year out the overwhelming proportions of American citizens makes its preferences felt, if at all, by no means other than going to the polls and casting a ballot.")³¹ If this is the case, in what sense can one justify Dahl's judgment (which we can infer from his critique of Mills) that, in some politically and morally significant sense, the majority do exercise some control (however indirect) over the general trend" (to use an imprecise phrase) of the decision-making on the "key issues"? Dahl's answer to this question is a very complex and subtle one, so I shall quote the relevant passages, which comprise what I take to be his answer, in full:

If the majority rarely rules on matters of specific policy, nevertheless the specific policies selected by a process of "minorities rule" probably lie most of the time within the bounds of consensus set by the important values of the politically active members of society, of whom the voters are a key group. And in this sense the majority (at least of the politically active) nearly always "rules" in a polyarchal system. For politicians subject to elections must operate within the limits set both by their own values, as indoctrinated members of the society, and by their expectations about what policies they can adopt and still be re-elected.

In a sense, what we ordinarily describe as democratic "politics" is merely the chaff. It is the surface manifestation, representing superficial conflicts. Prior to politics, beneath it, enveloping it, restricting it, conditioning it, is the underlying consensus on policy that usually exists in the society among a predominant portion of the politically active members.³²

Now, since 1) most key decisions are made with the participation of only a tiny proportion of the electorate, 2) within the bounds set by the "underlying consensus among a predominant proportion of the politically active members of the society" (who by Dahl's admission constitute a small minority of the total electorate), we can infer that whatever (indirect) control presumed to be exercised by the majority of the citizens can be considered significant only to the extent that the preferences they express in the elections are "genuine" preferences. Dahl, while admitting the theoretical possibility of "false consensus" and of "manipulated" preferences,³³ usually takes the notion of "preference" as something unproblematic, that is, as a "given" datum. Now, it has been generally believed (at least since Hobbes) that

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 130. ³² *Ibid.*, p. 132.

³³ Dahl, "A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model," pp. 468-469.

there is a fairly meaningful distinction between unreflectively internalized habits and ossified or stereotyped modes of response, on the one hand, and a conscious (that is, deliberate) choice among all the available, relevant alternatives, on the other.³⁴ If this is admitted as a meaningful distinction (and I believe it must be so admitted, if we are to have a meaningful discourse about politics, or any other morally significant activities), then the question arises as to where the voting and other politically relevant behavior patterns of most citizens lie in the continuum of mechanical, automatic response, on the one hand, and rational choice, on the other. While we do not as yet have entirely reliable data on this question, I believe it is a fair generalization to say that most of the competent observers (*e.g.*, Lazarsfeld, Schumpeter, the Michigan Research Center, David Truman, and Dahl himself³⁵) have placed much of political behavior (in so far as the largely apathetic citizens engage in politics at all) somewhat closer to the "habit" end of the continuum, rather than to that of "rational choice."

Now what does all this have to do with the validity of the pluralist model of power? The point to be made is simply this: to the extent that the vast majority of the citizens are politically apathetic, and untrained to perceive different alternatives, or to rationally deliberate about them, or to reflect and judge of the direct and indirect consequences of the different alternatives—to the extent that all this is true, they, the citizens, become reduced to mere embodiments of stereotyped attitudes, political myths, and unreflectively internalized habits, which are nonetheless politically relevant in the sense that they constitute an important reservoir of power. A reservoir of power for whom? Not for these citizens, obviously, who, on the contrary, become mere objects of politics and history to the extent their modes of political responses become stereotyped and ossified. The stereotyped norms and ossified modes of response serve as the institutionalized reservoir of power for *some* of those who constitute the politically active members of the society.

To the extent that Dahl takes the key concept of "preference" (on

³⁴ Dahl does not seem to doubt the meaningfulness of the notion of "rational choice." Cf. *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, pp. 56–57; *Modern Political Analysis*, pp. 95–96. See also Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, p. 194.

³⁵ Cf. B. R. Berelson, P. F. Lazarsfeld, and W. N. McPhee, *Voting* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 306 ff.; Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), pp. 256–264; Truman, "The Politics of New Collectivism," *passim*; and Dahl, *Who Governs?*, chap. 25, "Citizenship without Politics," pp. 276–281, 223–225.

which not only his model of power structure but also on his model of pluralist democracy rest) in an unproblematic way, and systematically fails to analyze this "institutionalized" aspect of power, his method predetermines the outcome of his analysis, *e.g.*, the conclusion that in American society, power is decentralized and widely diffused; and that "all active and legitimate groups in the population can make themselves heard at some crucial stage in the process of decision."³⁶

IV. AN EVALUATION OF THE TWO MODELS OF THE STRUCTURE OF POWER

The foregoing review of the recent polemic on the nature of the American power structure has revealed methodological limitations and conceptual one-sidedness in the pluralist as well as the elitist models of power.

On the one hand, Mills abstracts two important features from the socio-political reality, when he postulates the existence of a homogeneous, all-powerful, and self-conscious Power Elite. First, his model cannot explain (because it glosses over) the undeniable opaqueness or amorphousness of power relations. Second, he makes the political capacity of the Power Elite seem much more clear-cut and unambiguous than is warranted by the available empirical evidence. On the second problem, the pluralist model has a far greater explanatory force; in it, we see the elites' political capacity seriously handicapped by at least four significant factors: (1) the existence of many "veto" (interest) groups to whom, to borrow Morgenthau's striking analogy, the public power of the American government over many specific issues has been "parcelled out, in a quasi-feudal fashion"³⁷; (2) the undeniable fact of real political competition among the individual politicians and between the two major parties; (3) the stereotyped, ossified nature of popular attitudes, and the political myths and ideology to which the elites, too, are subject³⁸; and (4) certain peculiar features of the American political system such as the decentralized character of the political parties, and the existence of multiple, coordinate access in the

³⁶ Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, pp. 137-138.

³⁷ Hans J. Morgenthau, "Our Thwarted Republic: Public Power vs. New Feudalism," *Commentary*, 29 (June 1960), pp. 473-485. Referred to by Riesman in *Culture and Social Structure*, p. 450. See reference above, in note 1.

³⁸ Cf. William Kornhauser, "'Power Elite' or 'Veto Groups'?", p. 262 ff. See reference above, in note 1.

decision-making process which tends to favour obstruction and delaying tactics. The interaction of these four factors in the actual process of decision-making, not only on the national, but also on the state and local, levels of the governmental process, results in severe limitations on the political capacity of the elites to effectively cope with many urgent, widely acknowledged problems. Moreover, the fact that the multifarious combinations of each of these factors can and do affect the decision-making process on different levels of the government in different issue areas results in the amorphousness and opaqueness of the power structure, of which we spoke earlier. Where Mills' model abstracts all these specific dynamics of the power process from the American political reality, the pluralist approach provides us with a sophisticated conceptual framework and analytical tool with which to study the intricate problems resulting from the peculiar political features of modern industrial society in general, and of the American society in particular.

On the other hand, however, Mills' model has a strong persuasive force in so far as he addresses himself to the face of power glossed over by the pluralists; the disjunction between the fateful implications of the consequences of political decision-making on the structural level, and the inability of most men living in American society to do anything meaningful or significant about them. The key conceptual tool which he uses is the distinction (and the interrelation) between the social structure and the personal milieu.³⁹ Using this concept, Mills shows, on the one side, how the major institutional arrangements (political, economic, and military) have grown into gigantic proportions, how their power to make decisions has become concentrated and centralized, how their activities have become increasingly interdependent and coordinated; and how, on the other side, the vast majority of the citizens cannot transcend their narrow personal milieux even cognitively, let alone participate in any significant way in the process of making important decisions that have enormous consequences for their milieux. This incapacity of most men to become aware of the structural process results in widespread apathy, which in turn further reinforces their political alienation in terms of both their political consciousness and participation. The political abdication of the vast majority, as well as the nature of their infrequent, ritualized political participation, constitute the reservoir of institutionalized power for the elites, while at the same time limiting their political capacity.

³⁹ *The Power Elite*, pp. 2, 321 ff.; *The Sociological Imagination*, pp. 2 ff., 130-131, 173-194, and *passim*.

Although Mills' general conception is too oversimple, his concept of structure and milieu, together with Baratz and Bachrach's notion of the "dynamics of non-decision-making" founded upon a particular "mobilization of bias," provide us with a rudimentary analytical framework which we can utilize in order to analyze the "substantive" or "institutionalized" aspect of the structure of power. While this rudimentary analytical framework as yet has neither the conceptual clarity nor the operational quality comparable to those of the pluralist approach, it could, in principle, provide us with explanations as to how the vast majority of men in modern industrial society have come to lose their claim as political and historical subjects, and how the ossification of their norms, political attitudes, and conceptions as to what constitute their needs and the proper ways of satisfying these needs—how this process of ossification has had a differential impact on the relative power position of the various groups operating in the political process of our society.

An inescapable conclusion of our evaluation then, is that both these approaches and models reveal important features of social and political reality. To ignore the one or the other of these approaches to the analysis of the structure and processes of power is to conceal that reality.

Be that as it may, when I state that both these approaches are required for an adequate perception of reality, I do not by any means intend thereby to gloss over the divergent heuristic intent implicit in the two models. The heuristic intent of the pluralist model is to direct our attention to the problem raised by the fragmentation of political power, *i.e.*, "the problems of political capacity and of effective leadership." In contrast, the heuristic intent of the power-elite model (and of the substantive approach) is to bring the fact of powerlessness and the reality of political alienation on the part of the vast majority of men into sharp focus. They each define a specific problem when they interpret political reality; the definition of reality and the formulation of the central problem are closely integrated with one another.

Truman's brilliant and perceptive diagnosis of the present situation provides me with an appropriate focus for illustrating my meaning.⁴⁰

Truman characterizes the nature of American politics in the immediate future as "the politics of new collectivism." The term, "new collectivism," is deliberately used to differentiate it from the politics of the New Deal. In the latter, while the means were collective, the ends

⁴⁰ Truman, "The Politics of New Collectivism."

were individual "in the sense that they involved a minimum assurance that the 'forgotten man' could participate in the private market, as producers and especially as consumers. The welfare of this state was essentially private."⁴¹ In contrast, the problems raised by the politics of new collectivism "are not directly concerned with the benefits individually consumed."⁴² They represent needs that cannot be "met adequately through the private sector of the economy."⁴³ This "public" character of the problems of "new collectivism" raises a serious question as to whether the "pluralistic, individualistic system" prevailing in the United States will be able to meet the challenge. For implicit in such a system is

the assumption that diffusion of initiatives will foster creative action. American experience justifies that assumption, but it also obscures the dependence of that assumption upon a specific set of circumstances. [. . .] The units to which the initiatives have traditionally been delegated could be counted upon to take the kind of action required by society, because the needs to which these initiatives referred were directly and immediately connected with those units' conscious purposes. . . . When the society's needs have shifted, however, so that they are no longer primarily of the kind that is met by direct self-serving, and the pattern of the delegation remains unchanged, initiatives will still occur, but they will not likely be the ones required by the new needs. . . . In the simple words of Izak Walton's wise friend, what is everybody's business is nobody's business.⁴⁴

However, since the popular attitudes about what properly belongs to the political realm are firmly entrenched, they are not likely to change in the absence of major crisis, that is, in the absence of a major depression or a large-scale war. Since Truman does not wish to make the system's political capacity dependent on the emergence of such disastrous (but possibly productive) crises, he seeks for an alternative method of increasing the system's political capacity. He briefly considers the possible reliance on manipulative use of artificially created emergencies, but rejects it on the ground that such manipulation may give rise to "fantasy politics."⁴⁵ His own alternative, simply put, is that since we can neither mobilize the masses for the necessary political initiatives, nor change their political attitudes, we must rely on the increased capacity of the elites "not only to innovate in the realm of policy, but equally to contain and neutralize reactive responses to

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2. ⁴² *Ibid.* ⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19. ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

disturbing emergencies.”⁴⁶ These elites must include, in addition to the political elite, the corporate community, the elite of the mass media, and those of the trade unions, farm organizations, etc.⁴⁷ Two basic steps must be taken to increase the political capacity of the system as a whole under the direction of these elites. First, “an increase in the strength of central authority in the system will have to take place sufficient to reduce the diversity of risk within the political structure and thus to restrict the ease of negative action.” Secondly, “avoidance of a weakness of initiative in the system will require special capacities of those in command of points in the pluralized structure, especially outside the government.” For

these are the elite of the system, those in whom de Tocqueville put his faith when he proposed a means of achieving ‘many of the political advantages of aristocracy without its injustice or dangers.’ In the crucial politics of unseen emergency (*i.e.*, in the politics of new collectivism) they are, for all practical purpose, the people. From these must come awareness not only of consensus requirements of a bargaining system, but also of their strategic and essentially privileged position in the system. . . . Such awareness could provide intelligent, informed support for central initiatives necessary to meet the challenge of the age.⁴⁸

In this article, then, we can discover, in a very transparent form, the intimate links between: 1) Truman’s perception of the problem (*i.e.*, that of political capacity resulting from the character of new collectivism); 2) his proposed solution (*i.e.*, a greater centralization of decision-making and a closer coordination among the elites); 3) the designated agency of socio-political change (the elites in the command of strategic points in the pluralized structure); and 4) his own strategy (*i.e.*, to enlighten the elites about the nature of new problems, and to make an appeal to them to have more confidence and to possess a greater awareness of their “strategic and essentially privileged position in the system”). All this, needless to say, is interdependent with the way he perceives the effective reality; what is primary in his effective reality is the fact of fragmentation and diffusion of political power among the divergent interest groups, not the fact of the powerlessness and alienation of the masses. The heuristic intent of the pluralist model becomes crystal clear at this point.

Two points may be noted here: first, Truman makes the distinction between two modes of political participation by individuals and groups;

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12. ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

one being the self-serving mode which is only concerned with individual ends, and the other being a mode of participation with a wider social frame of reference. This distinction is analogous, although not identical, to the kind of normative distinction which Truman explicitly refused to make in a previous work as something "subjective" and incapable of "being communicated."⁴⁹ Second, we cannot suppress the question: "Greater political capacity for whom?" If a greater coordination and centralization of the political process were realized, what kind of normative frame of reference will regulate the political activity of a now more unified elite? Some notions of public or common social interest might be the answer, except for the fact that Truman explicitly declares such normative notions to be meaningless in *The Governmental Process*.⁵⁰ The question remains: "Political capacity for whom? and under whose control?"

V. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FOREGOING ANALYSIS

The diagnosis and the program formulated in Truman's essay roughly corresponds with Johnson's concept of the "Great Society." The proponents of the Great Society have a very sophisticated understanding of the problems of "new collectivism." In their fiscal and social welfare measures, they accept what Bloch-Laine has called "the irreversible phenomenon of socialization."⁵¹ Liberals like Truman and Johnson regard this trend toward greater centralization, bureaucratization, and "rationalization" in a relatively sanguine manner. The central problem for them is the maintenance and enhancement of the political capacity of the elites, and hence their concern with the "consensus."

The problem for the radicals is an entirely different one. For us, the problem is posed as one of restoring power to the masses, away from the elites. We, too, are concerned with the problem of political capacity; but for us, the problem is formulated in terms of loosening the ossified consciousness of the masses. We, too, are in favor of increasing "socialization" as such, but we wish to make certain that the latter will not merely indicate an increased "rationality" and "integration" at the expense of reason and autonomy. If we, then, postulate the "democratic

⁴⁹ Truman, *The Governmental Process*, pp. 38, 65. ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

⁵¹ François Bloch-Laine, "The Utility of Utopias for Reformers," *Daedalus* (Spring 1965), p. 424 ff.

revolution" as our political goal, what implications does the foregoing examination of the pluralist model of power have for our theoretical and practical activity?

To begin with, since the powerlessness of the masses does not originate in any naked coercion on the part of the elites, nor (as yet) in any formal restrictions on negative-juristic liberties,⁵² our main objective, both in theory and in practice, must be one of facilitating the masses' perception of social reality. This implies, on the one hand, that our conception of the new democracy must be formulated so as to be relevant to the problems in the existing society; and on the other hand, that our critical analysis of bourgeois democracy, and our strategy and tactics as well, must be such as to compel the recognition of the limits and irrationalities of bourgeois democracy, and thereby to muster the forces sufficient to go beyond these limits when the limits are reached.

More concretely, three important tasks confront us in the immediate future:

1) We must work out a viable model of the structure of power of the existing society. That we do not yet have such a model is one important conclusion of our examination of the pluralist and the elitist models. The methodological problems involved in working out such a model are enormous; many of them have not even been hinted at in this essay. It will have to be a cooperative enterprise, for such an understanding will require the collaboration of students in sociology, psychology, political economy, philosophy, history, and political science. One overriding task here is to develop the insights of the classical Marxian class analysis (which was almost totally neglected in my essay⁵³) and "assimilate" them into the two approaches to the analyses of power discussed in this essay. (For the present, at any rate, we should not hesitate to be "eclectic.")

2) We must develop a *workable* model of democracy. By a "workable" model, I mean a general conception which takes into account the salient sociological and technical concomitants of modern industrial society. We cannot wish away the phenomena of political apathy, the

⁵²On this and other aspects of the concept of political freedom, cf. Franz Neumann, "The Concept of Political Freedom," in *The Democratic and Authoritarian State* (The Free Press of Glencoe, 1957), pp. 169-200.

⁵³Bachrach and Baratz's notion of the "mobilization of bias" (which has a differential impact on the relative power position of the various groups within the society), and the concept of "substantive" or "institutionalized" aspect of power, refer to Marxian class analysis in an oblique way.

structural-milieu cleavage, divergent social frames of reference, etc., by blaming these solely on the commercial mass media, or on an inadequate educational system.⁵⁴ To be more specific: the kind of social consciousness presupposed by the "classical" versions of participatory democracy (e.g., those of Rousseau, Marx, Dewey, and A. D. Lindsay⁵⁵) seems incapable of practical realization, given the structural "imperatives" of existing modern industrial society. These structural "imperatives" (to use a perilously problematic, but very useful, phrase⁵⁶) seem to include the following: social stratification, bureaucratic mode of organization in many spheres of social life, a high degree of social differentiation and "compartmentalization" of the individual's life-activity, and a high degree of technicity required for operating each of the interdependent, institutional orders.

(The strength of the pluralist model of democracy is precisely that it takes these "structural imperatives" into account; and it "works." It works in the sense that it successfully secures a considerable degree of negative-juristic liberty,⁵⁷ at least for those who are not too "imprudent.")

In other words, if we want to build a participatory democracy within the setting of a modern industrial society, then we must find out the answers to the following questions:

a) What are the elements of the kind of social consciousness which is required for the proper functioning of such a democracy (in psychological, cognitive, and normative terms)? What kind of "clusterings" of such elements are empirically plausible? (Can we, for instance, plausibly wish for a clustering of: the communal solidarity of the traditional peasants, the calculative rationality of urban industrialists, the "characterological freedom" of modern radical intellectuals, the capacity for moral response, and for rational perception of the social process, of a Marx?)

b) How *variable* are each of the so-called structural "imperatives"

⁵⁴ Even Mills sometimes tends to take this over-simplified view. Cf. *The Power Elite*, chap. 13.

⁵⁵ John Dewey's *The Public and Its Problems* (Denver: Allan Swallow, 1927) is an unjustly neglected work. Cf. also A. D. Lindsay, *The Modern Democratic State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

⁵⁶ On the problematic nature of the concept of "structural imperative," cf. Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 136 ff.

⁵⁷ In a sense, this is an inaccurate statement, since many political groups on the left (C. P., P. L. P., etc.) find themselves under a constant legal harassment.

of modern, industrial society? For example, is social stratification really an "imperative," as most contemporary sociologists seem to maintain? If so, in what sense? and to what degree?

c) What are the various methods of *integrating* the "structural imperatives"? (E.g., different methods of integrating the economic system, different kinds of authority structure for the basic unit of economic production, ecological variables of urban life, etc.) The most crucial problems in this area include those relating to the comparative analysis of (democratic) politics of economic planning, of various forms of "workers' control," etc.⁵⁸

d) What kind of determinate relationships and hypotheses can we establish between the variables in (2) and (3) on the one hand, and those in (1) on the other?

Only when we have some answers to all these and many other questions of similar nature can we obtain a fairly intelligent guess as to what the range of possibilities for our historical epoch is. And only when we are armed with such guesses, can we avoid the self-delusion of the "incrementalist" reformism, as well as the irrelevance of the utopian putschism.

3) Since our task is to forge the noble ideal out of the vulgar reality, our practice must mediate the topos with the utopia. That is, for one thing, we must work out a coherent strategy which we may call (following the practice of the British and Italian radicals) the structural-reform strategy. The abstract principle that underlies this strategy is this: all tactics must be such as to facilitate the masses' (that is, our) perception of social reality, and this perception must be a perception within the perspective of the ideal. Lest all of this seems obvious and banal, let me give an example.

Johnson initiates a "War on Poverty" Program. What should our *general* (that is, our *strategic*) position be? Should we adopt a simplistic, negative attitude toward it, as a conspiracy to co-opt the poor into the Establishment? That may be our hypothesis, but we do not know for sure; and in any case, the masses of Harlem, who need that 100 million dollars, will not listen to us, if we give them a lecture on how the monopoly-capitalists want to keep exploiting Harlem Negroes by "giving" them 100 million dollars. Even if they did believe us, they will take the money anyway. (I would, too.) But, what if we present a

⁵⁸ For an original discussion of these questions, cf. Bertrand de Jouvenel, "Utopia for Practical Purpose," *Daedalus* (Spring 1965), pp. 437-453.

coherent, practicable (that is, practicable "here and now") program which is superior both in technical and political content to that of the government? In that event, to the extent that the government accepts some of our concrete proposals, we have made gains here and now, and our victories will enhance the masses' sense of political efficacy, and we would proceed to make more concrete proposals and demands. If the government rejects our proposals, to that extent, our hypotheses about the nature of the government's program and about the nature of the power structure, will be proved, demonstrated, and imprinted in the consciousness of the masses. The success of this strategy will depend largely upon: 1) the technical and political content of the alternatives we present on specific issues and problems; and 2) the degree and the nature of organization among the masses.

Obviously such isolated proposals by themselves will not constitute an adequate strategy for "the democratic revolution." Specific proposals and concrete programs (for urban redevelopment, etc.) must be an integrated part of a unitary program which encompasses national and international issues. To continually deepen the masses' awareness of the dialectic between national program and specific proposals, between the affirmation and the negation, and between the "here and now" and the ideal, is the logic and the core of the structural-reform strategy. Social consciousness cannot develop out of the "day-to-day" struggles alone, nor can it emerge out of mere propaganda and education.

In addition to working out such a strategy, we must develop, in our theoretical as well as in our practical work, a theory of organization, which, while taking account of the weaknesses and shortcomings of men as they exist here and now, is nevertheless "organically" linked to our ideal of participatory democracy. We should approach this task from two directions; on the one hand, we must soon make an effort to "translate" the nascent democratic styles of work now emerging in the various movements (SNCC, SDS, etc.) into a logical and theoretical form, reflect upon them, and spell out in full the various implications and problems we encounter. On the other hand, we should *critically* assimilate, not only the theories of organization worked out by the classical and American sociologists,⁵⁹ but also the theoretical works of Marx, Lenin, Gramsci, Lukacs, and especially those of Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-

⁵⁹ Especially the recent work done by Amitai Etzioni, cf. *Modern Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964) and *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations* (The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961).

chi.⁶⁰ Then, we should allow the "interplay" of the results of the two kinds of investigation. After all this, we can begin to work out gradually a realistic and principled theory of organization.

In short, only with a realistic strategy and theory of organization of the kind indicated above, can we push and explore the limits of bourgeois democracy ever further, and make certain that when the limiting point is reached, we shall have mustered a sufficient force to transcend it.

⁶⁰ I say, "especially those of Mao and Liu," because there is a tendency among the "non-doctrinaire" radicals to dismiss the works of these two men, in an off-hand manner.

Todd Gitlin

Local Pluralism as Theory and Ideology

I can take a small portion of this very large topic and try to prove something about it in some detail; or I can take the whole topic and try to be merely provocative. Naturally, I choose the second course. For one thing, it is more fun; and for another, we ought to try to reason together.

—C. WRIGHT MILLS

Every freshman studying political science is bombarded with the notion that America, thank God, is a “pluralist society.” What is generally meant by the phrase is something like this: power in America is distributed among a variety of groups and institutions in such a manner as to guarantee that no one institution can lord it over the collectivity of others. Talcott Parsons, David Riesman, Daniel Bell, Seymour Lipset, John K. Galbraith, V. O. Key and David Truman are among the most cited proponents of this view; C. Wright Mills is the favored whipping boy. The pluralist stance has well served the proponents of the widely touted “end of ideology” of the ’50s.

The following notes are concerned with the localized version of this Pollyannish outlook, finding and rejoicing in power similarly fragmented and balanced in local community or city. Local pluralism has become the rallying cry of urban renewers and modernizers who rationalize land deals and the exiling of the poor in the name of “everyone’s freedom”; of welfare-state bureaucrats and their academic apologists who find

SOURCE: *Studies on the Left*, V, 3 (1965), pp. 21–45. Reprinted with permission.

Todd Gitlin is a graduate student in political science at the University of Michigan, and organizer for the JOIN Community Union in Chicago.

comfort in insisting that an urban system so dispersed makes sweeping change impossible; of war-on-poverty boards weighted toward business and social agencies in the name of "democracy"; even of many liberals and labor leaders who celebrate their hard-won "power." The localized theory has its own growing academic literature, lending easy authority to the gradualist or the world-weary fatalist paralyzed by the era of the City at a time when serious movements for social change are coming into being. These notes, then, are intended to question the validity of local pluralism, and to inquire into its origins.

The study of localized power is most popular among social scientists. Charles Press' *Main Street Politics*, an annotated bibliography of scholarly periodical literature on the subject since 1950, lists the works of 127 authors, most of whom have written (or co-authored) more than one piece, some up to seven.¹ With dedication and fervor social scientists stake out "their" towns, wean "their" graduate students, and indulge in barren polemics with and against one another. Until recently, however, few have attempted to draw together the threads, to define the local pluralist perspective or construct an alternative model community power based on explicit assumptions and propositions.

Nelson Polsby's *Community Power and Political Theory*, published in 1963, signals a new stage in the developing debate. Enough new articles have been written to give the local pluralist a chance to project, if not demonstrate, a coherent system—indeed, an ideology. Polsby's theory has the virtue—and vulnerability—of a coherent if shallow worldview, representative of the implicit consensus among adherents to local pluralism. Much of Polsby's formulation flows from the study of New Haven power in Robert Dahl's *Who Governs?* (1961). The earnest New Haven school of Dahl, Polsby, and Raymond Wolfinger diverges somewhat from the more cynical Chicago (now Harvard) school of Edward Banfield and James Q. Wilson, its chief contender for systematic presentation; but Banfield's *Political Influence* (1961) is also a fairly well-ordered exposition of the local pluralist view. My analysis of local pluralism, abstracting the core from the muddle of idiosyncratic variations, will depend heavily—although not exclusively—on a reading of Polsby, Dahl, and Banfield.

The argument has three parts: first, local pluralism is a coherent theory with its own methodology and critique of the rival, "stratifica-

¹ Charles Press, *Main Street Politics: Policy-Making at the Local Level* (East Lansing, Institute for Community Development, 1962).

tion" model; second, as a theory it is inadequate and faulty; third, local pluralism constitutes an ideology as well as a theory, with historical roots in America and her academies, and serving certain of the felt needs of many American intellectuals in the 1950s and 1960s.

The lines from Mills that preface this paper are intended to be taken seriously and at face value. In a debate heretofore choked with what Whitehead called "misplaced concretism," some provocation, some pulling away from the trees for a look at the forest, seems called for.

THE ELEMENTS OF LOCAL PLURALISM

Local pluralism arises self-consciously to refute another model of community power relations, one Polsby calls the stratification approach. Polsby, Dahl, and Banfield do battle against theories that locate power more or less centrally in a closed circle of men with common economic and political interests: primarily Mills on the national level, Helen and Robert Lynd (*Middletown, Middletown in Transition*) and Floyd Hunter (*Community Power Structure*) locally. It is not surprising then that the local pluralist counter-attack shares the vagueness of much of the stratification literature, in most instances aiming to discredit specific assertions of the latter. Out of this bewildering welter of assertions and counter-assertions, five major components of local pluralism emerge:

- (1) There are no power elites; power is widely distributed in communities;
- (2) Power is always directly applied and observable;
- (3) Community power should be investigated with case studies of "important decisions";
- (4) Only decisions made by formal political bodies or persons should be studied; and
- (5) The power system is "slack," allowing for social change within it.

(1) Pluralists, as Polsby says, "see American society as fractured into a congeries of hundreds of small special interest groups, with incompletely overlapping memberships, widely different power bases, and a multitude of techniques for exercising influence on decisions salient to them . . ." ² Making allowances for the transition from

² Nelson Polsby, *Community Power and Political Theory* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1963), p. 118.

national to local perspective, they see American communities in a similar way. "There seems to be an unspoken notion among pluralist researchers that at bottom *nobody* dominates in a town, so that their first question to a local informant is likely to be not, 'Who runs this community?' but rather 'Does anyone at all run this community?'"³ In a further burst of self-examination, Polsby asks:

Why do pluralists reject the idea that *some* group necessarily dominates every community? The presumption that communities are likely to be less rather than more permanent in their patterns of decision-making is no doubt part of the answer, but another part is an even more fundamental presumption that human behavior is governed in large part by inertia. This notion leads pluralists to look upon overt activity as a more valid indication of involvement in issues than mere reputations for leadership.⁴

"Running" the community connotes control over all aspects of community life deemed central or significant by the observer. Local pluralists deny that in this sense any group "runs" a community.⁵ But this is not to deny the existence of community elites:

In any durable association of more than a handful of individuals, typically a relatively small proportion of the people exercises relatively great influence over all the important choices bearing on the life of the association—its survival, for example, or its share in such community resources as wealth, power, and esteem, or the way these resources are shared within the association, or changes in the structure, activities, and dominant goals of the association, and so on. These persons are, by definition, the leaders.⁶

What is asserted about these leaders is that the scopes of their power—that is, the areas of endeavor over which their power is effective—are not the same, or, more emphatically, overlap little if at all. As Dahl puts it, elite power is "non-cumulative."⁷ In the New Haven study, three "issue-areas" are examined to determine the influentials; in Banfield's study of Chicago issues, six separate political decisions are examined. Polsby, Dahl, and Banfield agree that many different individuals representing a variety of socio-economic status strata exerted sig-

³ *Ibid.*, p. 116. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁵ Although Polsby and Dahl both indicate initially that they will be primarily concerned with New Haven decision-making, both end up generalizing. Cf. Peter Rossi, cited below, fn. 41.

⁶ Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1961), p. 95.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 169 ff.

nificant power over the examined decisions. All these individuals seemed to have in common was their membership in the middle classes. Dahl found almost no overlap among his three groups of influentials; Banfield found only slightly more. There are *elites*, say the local pluralists; but there is no *elite*.

(2) The local pluralists insist that power not be ascribed to behind-the-scenes groups operating outside the purview of normal or, at least, academic scrutiny. To locate power outside visible channels, insists Dahl, is to succumb to a "principle of infinite regress,"⁸ in which power is successively and continually located behind the presumed influentials, until ultimately a Prime Mover (Power Elite) is found. The thematic attribution of power behind the scenes, according to Dahl and Polsby, is to a great degree responsible for the findings of stratification theorists; their methodology determines their results. They assume the existence of a power elite, and thus find it—whether by hypothesis of "objective interests" (a notion Polsby pins on the Lynds) or the self-fulfilling reputational method of Floyd Hunter. The pluralists, on the other hand, insist that a theory of community power, like any scientific theory, must be falsifiable by empirical evidence.⁹ Since an assertion of infinite regress is by definition unfalsifiable—"Have you stopped beating your wife?"—it is thus unscientific. The implication is that the pluralist methodology, by identifying power solely through case studies, is perforce scientific.

(3) The assertion that any group "potentially" could exercise significant or decisive, or any influence in community affairs is not easy to discuss in a scientific manner. *How can one tell, after all, whether or not an actor is powerful unless some sequence of events, competently observed, attests to his power?*¹⁰

Thus pluralists insist that power be studied *in process*—as it is "actually" applied toward the achievement of a certain result. Significant power is thus assumed to be discontinuous as well as non-cumulative. A decision identified by the analyst as "important" is observed to note the positions of parties before the event, and the extent to which the outcome reflects pre-existing positions; this is in accordance with Dahl's refined definition of power.¹¹ But the coincidence of an actor's pre-deci-

⁸ Robert Dahl, "A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model," *American Political Science Review*, 52 (June 1958), p. 463. Henceforth abbreviated "Critique."

⁹ In this they follow the lead of Karl Popper, *Ibid.*, p. 463. (See fn. 52 below.)

¹⁰ Polsby, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

¹¹ Robert Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science*, 2 (July 1957), pp. 201-215. Henceforth abbreviated "Concept."

sion position with the outcome reached is *not* regarded as *prima facie* evidence that he exerted decisive or even significant power in the situation.¹² The decision-making event is not regarded as the scientist's "black box," but rather as a process of detectable change in attitudes or behavior. In no other way than by studying specific decisions, state the pluralists, can power with regard to specified scopes be definitively located. One of their major criticisms of stratification theorists is that they concentrate on the potential *sources* of influence (wealth, institutional position, etc.) to the exclusion of noting "how fully and how efficiently these resources are exploited."¹³ The pluralists mean to correct the balance by the microscopic investigation of particular decisions.

They are motivated to do so for still another reason. Stratification theorists from Marx on down have hypothesized the existence of "objective class interests" that transcend seeming deviations and, in some sense, vitiate observed behavior. Pluralists are scornful of such formulations, viewing them simply as "constructs of the analyst." Polsby says that the hypothesizing of class consciousness allows the observer to discount deviations from the hypothetical pattern as mere "false consciousness," an attitude he regards as arbitrary and unscientific.¹⁴ And, he continues, attributions of *individual* interest are as difficult to establish as are *class* interests: "the benefits and costs to any individual of . . . steel-and-concrete policy outcomes are diffuse and intangible and perhaps impossible to evaluate sensibly without making all sorts of highly questionable assumptions."¹⁵ (Polsby does not specify these assumptions). Thus influence must be connected to a specific role in the decision-making process: The ability to initiate or veto proposals.¹⁶

Further, pluralists justify the case-study approach by insisting that the decisions they examine are "important" ones. So, interestingly enough, do many stratification theorists, including the Lynds and Mills.¹⁷ Cases are chosen according to their prominence in mass media and educated conversation,¹⁸ although Polsby suggests more rigorous criteria:

¹² Edward Banfield, *Political Influence* (New York: The Free Press Glencoe, 1961), p. 10.

¹³ Robert Dahl, "The Analysis of Influence in Local Communities," in Charles R. Adrian (ed.), *Social Science and Community Action* (East Lansing: Institute for Community Development, 1960), p. 35. Henceforth abbreviated "Analysis."

¹⁴ Polsby, *op. cit.*, p. 23. ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 91. ¹⁶ Dahl, *Who Governs?*, p. 181.

¹⁷ Mills talks about the "big-range" decisions; the Lynds use a similar terminology.

¹⁸ Banfield, *op. cit.*, p. 9; Dahl, *Who Governs?*, *passim*.

1. How many people are affected by outcomes,
2. How many different kinds of community resources are distributed by outcomes,
3. How much in amount of resources are distributed by outcomes,
4. How drastically present community resource distributions are altered by outcomes.

Decisions can be ranked "in principle . . . by making use of one or another, or a combination" of these criteria.¹⁹

Dahl suggests a further criterion of importance; "as a necessary though possibly not a sufficient condition . . . the issue should involve actual disagreements in preferences among two or more groups. In short, the case of 'indifference vs. preference' would be ruled out."²⁰

(4) Local pluralists restrict their attention to influence over *governmental* decisions. Often this assumption is stated without defense: thus, "to narrow the field of inquiry even more, I propose to restrict my attention to decisions made by 'political' officials."²¹ Polsby, however, attempts to justify this focus by referring to his criteria of controversy and importance. He is interested in "decisions affecting large segments of the population of local communities" and "concerned primarily with local political power, since the political arena is the sector of community life in which large groups in the community make demands upon one another and collectively determine policy outcomes."²²

(5) To say that power with regard to certain scopes is widely dispersed, that resources are not always converted to the actual exertion of power, is tantamount to saying that the system of power is quite fluid. Most people fail to utilize their resources in the political arena—either the perceived costs are too great,²³ or the issues are not seen as salient, or there are what Dahl calls "variations in alternative opportunities."²⁴ Thus the power system is "slack." Someone who "pyramids" his resources is able to "take up the slack" by filling the "power vacuum."²⁵ Banfield explains the persistence of political machines and the genesis of strong mayors in this manner.²⁶ Another implication is that accumulations of votes, or decisions to throw considerable personal resources into

¹⁹ Polsby, *op. cit.*, pp. 95–96.

²⁰ Dahl, "Critique," p. 467; Banfield, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

²¹ Dahl, "Analysis," p. 25. ²² Polsby, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

²³ Dahl, "Concept." ²⁴ Dahl, *Who Governs?*, p. 293.

²⁵ Cf. Polsby, *op. cit.*, p. 37, and p. 17 above. See also *ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁶ Banfield (ed.), *Urban Government* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), *passim*.

political frays, can have significant influence whatever the established distribution of power. Where there are "hundreds of small special interest groups," there is always room for one more. Where power is non-cumulative, there is always an "issue-area" to be staked out or at least contested by upstarts.

THE THEORY EXAMINED

The Emperor called his clothes "new," differentiating them from older fashions; but nevertheless they were nonexistent. Local pluralism breaks down as a theory in part because it tries too hard to avoid the attributed difficulties of stratification models; in part because of methodological difficulties; in part because its definitions and assumptions dictate its conclusions; and in part because it is wilfully blind to the proper purposes of the study of power.

1. Who Exerts Power?

In the local pluralists' critique, stratification theories locate power in a unified power elite, in which businessmen and their associates loom large. This view is attacked by adducing evidence that businessmen are not generally united in their policy preferences. The attribution of monolithic control to power elites is, however, a distortion of much of stratification thinking. Mills, for example, indicates that his power elite comes together, and is thus most visible, only at times of crisis.²⁷ Critics of Mills, including Daniel Bell,²⁸ accuse him of slurring over evidence of significant disputes among political, military, and economic elites, implying that such evidence vitiates the notion of a power elite. To some extent Mills does neglect intra-elite differences, although the Lynds acknowledge them.²⁹

Although stratification theory does not make this sufficiently explicit, a theory of power centralization does not require that the power elite be monolithic. It need only insist that power with regard to scopes specified as important reside primarily in the hands of a small group,

²⁷ C. Wright Mills, "The Power Elite: Military, Economic and Political," in Arthur Kornhauser, ed., *Problems of Power in American Democracy* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1959), p. 164.

²⁸ Daniel Bell, "The Power Elite Reconsidered," *American Journal of Sociology*, 64 (November, 1958), pp. 238-250.

²⁹ See, for example, the case of political differences in the X family, in Robert and Helen Lynd, *Middletown in Transition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927).

and that significant disputes concerning social decisions take place only within this group. That powerful men disagree on the proper use of their power does not *a priori* detract from the fact of their personal power; that they monopolize debate may indeed underscore it.³⁰

Interestingly, four of Banfield's six case studies of decision-making in Chicago are disputes among businessmen and heads of governmental and "civic" agencies (universities, welfare organizations, hospitals, etc.). No representatives of labor organizations, churches, Negroes,³¹ or the unaffiliated have significant power over the four decisions involved. These four involve the location of various pieces of construction work; another has to do with a public welfare agency merger, and another with the subsidization of the transit authority. All, in other words, affect the welfare of large numbers of Chicagoans, and the allocation of significant public resources. But the four having to do with construction are decided by a relatively small handful of individuals. The other two involve primarily Mayor Daley, Governor Stratton, and other formally political officials.

In Dahl's study of New Haven, three main issues are examined to determine the possession of power: political nominations, school location, and urban renewal. Power is found to be widely dispersed; the only individual powerful in all three areas is Mayor Richard Lee. Lee has "pyramided" his power by careful choice of issues, and his power emanates from the populace that maintains him in office. This is taken to be refutation of a stratification model, but it is only that by a considerable stretch of the imagination.

Only a vulgarized stratification theory sees "political" officials in general merely as inert agents of the will of an upper group. The Lynds drew such a picture of Middletown, but it is plausible for a small, provincial city in a way it is not for an industrially diversified metropolis. Mills saw the power elite as a coalition of political, military, and corporate elites whose relative power was continually in flux. Of the more influential stratification theorists, perhaps only Hunter views elected officials as directly responsible, as a general rule, to an upper class. Yet, attributing this notion to the stratification theory impels the pluralists to

³⁰ Examples are the Truman-MacArthur controversy and the decision not to intervene actively in the Indochinese War in 1954. MacArthur and Admiral Radford were, respectively, *almost* powerful enough to prevail. That "almost" is quantitative, not qualitative.

³¹ Civil rights "leaders" play only marginal roles in the hospital controversy, and no role whatsoever in the other cases. Banfield, *Political Influence*, pp. 42 f.

the entirely contrary view: that power is so splintered and widespread that strong leaders, circulating with ease among all power groups, using all and belonging to none, are necessary. Mayors Lee and Daley are intended, almost by their very existence, to refute the stratification view.

The problem is that the pluralists tend to overlook the importance of the precise manner in which the strong Mayor accumulates influence and contracts debts. Banfield, for example, notes blandly that

Wanting to do "big things" and not caring very much which ones, the political head will be open to suggestions. (When Mr. Daley took office, he immediately wrote to three or four of the city's most prominent businessmen asking them to list the things they thought most needed doing.)³²

The foregoing lapses, and the question of who—if anyone, or not everyone—was served by Mayor Lee's highly touted redevelopment program, blend into the problem of controversy and the definition of power.

2. Cooptation, Consensus, and Objective Interests

If power means what Dahl and Banfield³³ intend it to mean, then businessmen in the last-quoted instance had great potential power over decisions to be undertaken by the Daley Administration. It could, however, be argued that Daley was simply undertaking to coopt the businessmen by ingratiating himself with them. If the businessmen and Daley both preferred a certain objective, Daley would be deduced to have held the determining power; the businessmen would have trailed along for the sake of face. But for the local pluralist, the coincidence of preference makes the location of power impossible! Local pluralism exorcises the concept of cooptation, so that all power is above-board, intended, and non-reciprocal. Thus Banfield's revealing anecdote indicts the rest of his analysis.

Banfield would protest that he is fully conscious of the mechanism of cooptation, and would adduce the following passage:

An even more important function of the co-opted "civic leader" is to legitimate the plans of the political head. In Chicago, politicians are regarded with distrust and career civil servants with mild contempt. If official acts are to have the confidence of the public, they must be approved by laymen whose competence and disinterestedness are considered to be beyond question. Those who have wealth and social

³² *Ibid.*, p. 251.

³³ "By 'influence' is meant ability to get others to act, think, or feel as one intends." *Ibid.*, p. 3.

position, who are highly successful in business or in the professions, and (what is not very different) who head civic associations are qualified to sanction the politician's acts. . . .⁸⁴

The rub here is the phrase, "the plans of the political head." If these plans emanated—fitting Dahl's criterion of "veto or initiation"—from businessmen originally, they are "the Mayor's" only in a misleading sense: on the selling end, shall we say, rather than the production end. His case-history slate indicates the extent to which Chicago "issues" were identified as such and initiated by businessmen—or, "what is not very different," by heads of civic associations. And does not the identification of businessmen with civic association leaders admit the concept of "objective interest" back into legitimate parlance? Indeed, it points to an operational definition of "class" that I will bring up later.

If cooptation is an admissible concept (as it is for both Banfield and Dahl),⁸⁵ then the problem of the coincidence of attitudes must be reopened. Dahl, for example, notes that most of the members of the New Haven Board of Finance are and always have been businessmen: ". . . But it would be wrong to suppose that Economic Notables and businessmen are in constant conflict with other significant groups over the policy of keeping taxes and expenditures low."⁸⁶ He is not arguing that the businessman's Board of Finance cuts taxes *in order to* please the wider public. The question is, if Mayor Lee is permitted to coopt business leaders in order to legitimize his redevelopment program, why are not businessmen allowed to coopt other sectors of the population? Once the Pandora's box of motivations has been opened, it cannot be easily shut.

Further, cooptation implies the subduing of another's interests in exchange for nominal position in non-decision-making status. Note: "another's interests." Dahl and Polsby emphasize that in order to determine whether power has been exercised, one must know the attitudes or behavior of the target before and after the presumed exercise of power. The presumption is that there was a pre-existent attitude. How, indeed, does this attitude, the "another's interests," differ from what the pluralists scornfully dismiss as "objective interests"? True, the latter is attributed to collectives and the former only to individuals; but is that a substantive difference, enough to admit the individualized hypothesis but reject the collective? The pre-existent attitude of the target is not always

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 277. ⁸⁵ Dahl, *Who Governs?*, pp. 140 ff. ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 82–83.

known; (as Polsby admits) neither are the prior preferences of the cooptees. The coopter "knows," but not empirically. These, as well as objective class interests," are "constructs of the analyst." Such constructs are inevitable in social analysis.

How, asks Press, "can we always tell whose wants, if anyone's, the decision-maker is anticipating?"³⁷ Polsby gives vent to the same sort of nihilism.³⁸ And, affirming the same point even more strongly, he later gives four reasons why one needs to know more than "who gains, who loses," as a result of a community decision:

- (1) value distributions occur without explicit decisions taking place . . . ;
- (2) values within the community may be distributed in important ways as a by-product of decisions and nondecisions made outside the community;
- (3) there are many irrationalities in decision-making . . . ,³⁹
- (4) *the powerful may intentionally distribute values to the non-powerful.*

Cooptation and the distribution of "values" to the nonpowerful, then, initiate the pluralist model of power location. "Veto and initiation" do not suffice as surrogate criteria, since the former stretches only so far and the latter begs what the pluralists themselves, in other moods, consider to be the crucial question of motivation—the question of the shared "interests."

3. Important Decisions

The rejection of nongovernmental decisions from pluralist studies (even from many stratification studies) colors their conclusions even further. There is room for honest differences in power analysis depending on what city one is talking about, and at what time in history;⁴⁰ such differences, even between systems of control in New Haven and Atlanta, are explicable in terms of historical developments.⁴¹ A fixation on these differences, though, obscures the larger similarities that the pluralists allow for in their introductions but shunt aside when the research is done.

³⁷ Press, *op. cit.*, p. iv. ³⁸ Polsby, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 132. (My emphasis.) "Values" in this context means "goods that the community regards as valuable," e. g., money.

⁴⁰ Dahl, *Who Governs?*, p. 40: "Not a single manufacturer or executive of a large corporation has been elected mayor in the twentieth century."

⁴¹ Peter Rossi, "Power and Community Structure," in Banfield (ed.), *Urban Government*, p. 420.

Polsby, the only one of the pluralists who bothers to defend this methodological restriction on grounds other than "convenience," confines himself to "political" decisions because "the political arena is the sector of community life in which large groups in the community make demands upon one another . . ." ⁴² Without overt controversy there are no decisions, hence by definition no power relations, say the pluralists. But this judgment weights the scales against finding centralized power: it purposely seeks out those spheres of decision-making in which there is controversy—hence excludes those spheres over which power is great or even absolute (and controversy subdued or nonexistent). This point is related to the above one—that the pluralists, for all their criteria, really have no theory of power. The connection is illuminated by Dahl's remark that this notion of power, dependent on overt controversy, is not applicable in totalitarian systems.⁴³ Neither, one must add, is it applicable with regard to any scope over which power approaches the absolute.

The salience of nongovernmental decisions can be denied in either of two ways: by denying their importance or by denying that they are decisions. Both lines of *a priori* argument break down. In the first place, as Peter Rossi notes, there is a "vicious circle" of conceptions of importance on the one hand and data-collection on the other.⁴⁴

This is the dilemma of all social science; it is never entirely disposed of, but can be managed if the criteria for selection are as objective as possible. Polsby himself had adduced such a list of criteria. But there are many kinds of decisions that fall into such categories and yet are unconsidered by pluralist theorists. These involve: the types and numbers of jobs available in a community; the types and numbers of goods available; what loans are available; what kind of pursuit of leisure is possible; what incomes are available; the content of mass media. Such community decisions are made mostly by private bodies not even formally responsible to the larger population; many of these bodies are national, but many too are only local in scope. Astute observers of the corporations have been commenting on this awesome power recently. For example, a Harvard Business School professor has noted that "No group in history has wielded the power that management in the typical corporation does today. A handful of people hold sway over standards of living, chances to work, and the welfare of the community, the nation, and

⁴² Polsby, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁴³ Dahl, "Critique," p. 468.

⁴⁴ Rossi, *op. cit.*, p. 415.

the world . . . unlike a democratic government, this group is self-perpetuating. It is small and cohesive . . .⁴⁵

"Standards of living, chances to work, the welfare of the community . . .": by all conceivable sets of criteria for "importance," certainly by Polsby's, these are terribly important scopes. Yet the pluralists do not consider them, or those who have power over them, at all.

Second, the pluralists profess inability to detect power relations in "non-decisions"—continuing processes that maintain certain aspects of the social system. This professing is often disingenuous. Polsby, for example, sees "inertia" as governing human behavior "in large part"—

The presumption of inertia also helps put economic aid and social notables into perspective. If a man's major life work is banking, the pluralist presumes he will spend his time at the bank, and not in manipulating community decisions.⁴⁶

As if banking were not a series of manipulations of community decisions, perforce! Indeed, in listing the varieties of bases of influence available in communities, Dahl first mentions "money and credit," then "control over jobs."⁴⁷ While he does not intend his listing to be ranked according to the importance of these bases, the coincidence (with "control over jobs" meaning much more than "political" patronage) is felicitous. The consequences of credit are not all predictable, but the decision to allow or withhold credit is nonetheless far-reaching in its importance (according to Polsby's criteria). Even the intended aspects of credit have massive repercussions on jobs, product availability, incomes, etc.

In *Who Governs?* Dahl, in attempting to explain the reluctance of resource-laden groups and individuals to use their potential influence, introduces the concept of "variations in alternative opportunities,"⁴⁸ according to which resources are withheld from application to governmental decision-making because they can best be used elsewhere. Strangely enough, he does not explain what is in fact done with the withheld resources. By refusing to examine extra-governmental power, particularly where Economic Notables are concerned, he begs a serious question.

Polsby makes a passing effort to handle this concern:

Any amount of evidence unfavorable to the view that the inner business control group rules can be discarded on the ground that the issues at

"Benjamin Selekman, "Power and Morality in Business," in Dan H. Fenn, Jr. (ed.) *Management's Mission in a New Society* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1958), p. 308.

"Polsby, *op. cit.*, p. 116. "Dahl, "Analysis," p. 32.

"Dahl, *Who Governs?*, p. 316.

stake are not essential for the maintenance of the power elite's position. The inner business control group only prevails on "important" issues, which are likely to be (by definition) those issues on which the inner business control group prevails. The only way out of this circle would be to apply criteria presented by the writers to distinguish important issues.⁴⁹

But Polsby himself has adduced the criteria he calls for. Their application can only substantiate his claim that, indeed, most governmental decisions are not considered salient to Economic Notables (for they are in fact not as important as extra-governmental decisions). But when they are considered sufficiently salient, power resources are carried from the private into the public sphere.

"Nondecisions," in fact, can alternatively be seen as sequences of small decisions many of whose consequences are in fact intended and predictable. Even the unintended ones should be admitted into power analysis for the sake of consistency. The possibility of fixing *responsibility* has traditionally implied the attribution of power. By denying the latter, so is the former negated. The shadow of banal Eichmann implicates the view that small decisions are not *decisions*. Even in law, "I didn't know the gun was loaded" is no defense, although it may be a mitigating circumstance. A workable theory of power needs to allow for such circumstances, not ignore them.

4. *The Misleading Apotheosis*

Implicit in local pluralism is the definite feeling that in a qualitative way things are as they should be. Because power is "slack," anyone with grievances to bring to bear against the system—as long as he regards the system as legitimate in its broad outlines⁵⁰—can organize a pressure group that clashes with others in the political arena and emerges, presumably, with some part of its loaf firmly in hand (though anyone who rejects that legitimacy is rightfully powerless). Because there is no power elite, anyone can exert power by careful accumulation and application of resources, as long as he plays the game according to the rules. Because top elites, insofar as they exist, clash, less powerful groups can achieve their results by exploiting that higher conflict.⁵¹

One characteristic of the Dahl-Banfield probabilistic (zero-sum) definition of power is that, with regard to a specified scope, someone has it only to the extent that someone else does not. The system of power is,

⁴⁹ Polsby, *op. cit.*, p. 24. ⁵⁰ Dahl, *Who Governs?*, p. 316. ⁵¹ Bell, *op. cit.*

by definition, static. Thus a new entry into the political arena, unless it translates the terms of power by creating (somehow) a qualitatively new situation, cannot, by definition, achieve power with regard to any scope already "staked out." This is patently absurd, because power relationships do change in history. But if the probabilistic definition of power is held, and the philosophical difficulties inherent in the concept of probability are ignored,⁵² pluralism is restrictive. It applies only to certain groupings, not to others.

The pluralists do not admit to the logic of their definition. If power is allowed to reside in certain hands, the fault is with those who fail to challenge it. August Hollingshead, in *Elmtown's Youth*, indicted the local school board for various wrong-doings. Polsby, commenting on Hollingshead's attribution of untouchable power to the board, then argues as follows:

The Elmtown school board's term of office was set by statute, and all seven members of the board stood for election at the same time. Anyone could be placed on the ballot for election to one of the seven non-paid, nonpolitical positions on the board by filing a petition signed by 50 voters, or by 10 per cent of the voters in the last school election, whichever was less. These basic facts were at the disposal of the public, *if the public wanted to take notice of them.*

But apparently, interest in elections to the Board of Education was exceedingly low. . . . The machinations depicted above seem likely to have assured control over the board by a small group in a situation where no other group cared to compete the matter, but *we should not assume that some seriously competing group could easily have been prevented from trying to fill vacancies—or nonvacancies—on the board . . .*⁵³

Aside from the fact that such speculation runs contrary to Polsby's recurrent warning that power should not be attributed to anyone without examination of case studies, it again betrays a naive notion of power. Power is not seen to penetrate to the level of the volition to wrest it away. Undoubtedly, the behavior of all those who tolerate ("consent to") the present distribution of power is not regarded by pluralists as an accumulation of decisions not to attempt to intervene. But if subjective evidence is any indication of the whole truth, one of the major determinants of political apathy is the perceived "futility of political activ-

⁵² Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1960).

⁵³ Polsby, *op. cit.*, p. 37. (My emphasis.)

ity.”⁵⁴ To what extent such feelings correspond to the truth of the matter is for empirical investigation to uncover. The investigation of that truth is hindered by a refusal to recognize that failures to act are decisions.

To sum up, the optimistic implications of the pluralist notion of power “slack” depend on an overly restrictive definition of power. That very definition, carried to its logical consequence, belies the optimistic implications. There is a contradiction here not easily explicable within the framework of local pluralism.

It is appropriate, then, to seek the origin of this paradox, and of the other failures of pluralist theory sketched above, in factors external to the theory itself.

THE THEORY AS IDEOLOGY

1. The most obvious error in pluralist theories is that they take little or no account of decisions that are not purely governmental. Local pluralists are not the only ones guilty of this bad judgment; Hunter, for example, confines his investigation into Atlanta’s structure of power to the fate of “community projects”—government decisions of a particular type. But the trend is outstanding among pluralists. We can speculate that there is a cause—in some sense prior to the pluralism-stratification conflict—that generates the flaw but expresses itself most naturally in the pluralist approach. That cause may be, as Robert Lynd argues, the traditional association of power with tyrannical political institutions.⁵⁵ This would be particularly true in the United States, with its national fixation—unique in the world—on the evils of centralized government. One would then expect that local pluralism would be a peculiarly American phenomenon—as I believe is the case.

2. But this etiology goes only so far; it establishes a necessary condition for the appearance of local pluralism in America, but does not explain why it arose when it did and not at some other time. The search for a specific condition must be historically specific.

One striking characteristic of the Middletown studies is that almost all of the community issues that arose in both periods (late ’20s and ’30s) were class issues, and seen as such by the contestants and by keen

⁵⁴ Morris Rosenberg, “Some Determinants of Political Apathy,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Winter 1954.

⁵⁵ Robert Lynd, “Power in American Society as Resource and Problem,” in Kornhauser (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 9.

local observers. This was not so in Dahl's New Haven of the '50s, where, he says, "The new issues did not so much emphasize divisible costs and benefits—either to an ethnic group or a class—as shared costs and benefits diffused across many different groups and strata."⁵⁶

I have argued above that consensus tells nothing about the distribution of power, so that an outcome can reveal power without overtly "taking on a class aspect." Still, the salient community issues of the '50s, in New Haven as elsewhere, were less class-divisive than in earlier epochs.⁵⁷ But does this mean that class conflict declined, or only that the line across which it took place shifted? Polsby and Dahl do not entertain this possibility. Polsby, for instance, reveals the "unanimity" of attitudes toward redevelopment in this way: "Who wanted urban redevelopment? By 1957, practically everyone in New Haven who had anything to say in public strongly favored this program."⁵⁸ Dahl indicates who did not "have anything to say in public": "several hundred slum dwellers without much political influence."⁵⁹ They and "a handful of small-business men" were also the only residents who "suffered directly" from redevelopment, although as Dahl himself points out, the material proceeds of the renewal program were weighted toward "downtown property owners and construction contractors."⁶⁰ But the point is not only that rewards were . . . distributed unequally, for Polsby is right in saying that direct gain bears no necessary relation to power. And even among the middle and upper classes, only a handful of individuals participated in the decisions Dahl cites.

By Dahl's own testimony, only certain members of the middle and upper classes are those who "have something to say in public" about community decisions in New Haven. Other surveys have pointed to the political apathy of the poor, an alienation which far outweighs the

⁵⁶ Dahl, *Who Governs?*, p. 60.

⁵⁷ Dahl also overestimates this phenomenon. See p. 62. In 1959, a sample of New Haven voters were asked, "In your opinion what are the most important problems in New Haven?" As Dahl reports, "Far and away the most commonly mentioned problems were redevelopment, traffic and parking . . ." Dahl contrasts these results with those of Gallup polls of a nation-wide cross-section in the '30s and '40s which turned up between 21% and 53% saying that unemployment was the "most vital issue." But the Gallup polls asked respondents what they thought the most important problems were "before the *American people* today." The differences in the ways the questions were asked could easily account for the discrepancies in response.

⁵⁸ Polsby, *op. cit.*, p. 71. ⁵⁹ Dahl, *Who Governs?*, p. 244.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

apathy of the working class in general. Redevelopment, the outstanding public issue of the '50s in New Haven, did indeed divide the few from the many—the few were “several hundred slum dwellers” without much political influence.

Ironically, the pluralists' tacit insistence that the only classes are those Marx saw as classes colors their view of social conflict. The poor, those without political confidence or many applicable resources, are not even surveyed. Polsby never tells us the reaction of those slum dwellers to the clearance of the Oak Street neighborhood;⁶¹ Dahl refers to the residents only in the passage cited, nowhere else in his 355-page book. If class can be redefined to coincide with power over vital community (governmental *and* extra-governmental) decisions—as I believe Mills bordered on saying in *The Power Elite*—then class lines have been in transition while rewards are still located on only one side of the line, however inequitably.

There is still another aspect of the situation peculiar to the '50s. By derogating the power of businessmen, the local pluralists uphold the merit of the *status quo*. A 1953 Survey Research Center survey of public attitudes toward big business uncovered a correlation: The higher big business is seen in the power and influence structure of the nation, the more probable is the inclination towards a reduction in its power.⁶² The logic of this psychological connection is that the more one wishes to augment the power of business, the less powerful it is seen to be. At least one strand in pluralist thinking follows that chain of logic; it is one of the underpinnings of Berle's argument for “corporate responsibility” and related calls for business activism.

And in the '50s, when for a variety of reasons, including the ascendancy of the cold war and the consolidation of the labor movement, big business “dropped out of sight,” it was much easier to think that businessmen had lost their power. Dahl notes that since 1899 mayors in New Haven have not been Economic Notables, whereas all mayors from 1842 to 1897 had been of the upper economic class.⁶³ One can hypothesize that by the '50s, with the industrial boom and the depression safely behind, businessmen had less need to intervene directly in community decisions. They were also, as Dahl points out, more concerned with decisions of national scope than previously,⁶⁴ as the country, be-

⁶¹ Polsby, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁶² Burton Fisher and Stephen Withey, *Big Business as the People See It* (Ann Arbor: Survey Research Center, 1953), p. x.

⁶³ Dahl, *Who Governs?*, pp. 12–14, 40. ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

cause of depression, World War, and cold war, became more "national" than before in a parallel process. This hypothesis is not disproved, as the pluralists would like, by asserting that the burden of proof is on its proponent. For a fair-minded investigation would consider that realm of potential proof as well as the contrary evidence. Why, then, has that realm not been explored?

3. The case study approach to power location should not be discredited; but why are only certain cases studied? Sociologists and political scientists are not given to studying the processes of power within businesses, between business and labor, and between business and the community. Arthur Kornhauser surmises "that some part of the reason lies in the aversion of top people in powerful organizations to seeing analyses published either of their organization's influence or the operations of its leadership."⁶⁵ It is not necessary that this be entirely true; investigators need only suspect its truth to shy away from studies that would rock the cornucopia of grants and make it hard to "get along." Mills, too, in a footnote to *The Power Elite*, acknowledges some haze in his descriptions of behind-the-scenes exertion of power among economic, political, and military elites, and attributes this to the interests of those elites in concealing their power.⁶⁶ The kernel of the assertion here is empirical: that businessmen, for example, do not open their doors to investigators of power.⁶⁷ Evidence for or against this proposition could and should be mounted, and I strongly suspect it would prove correct. Mills' excuse is rooted in common political sense, and can also be tested. It remains for an enterprising sociologist to knock on the door. And if the door opened, would foundation support be readily available for the research—as available as it is, say, for studies of influence over political decisions in communities?

4. Local pluralism speaks to still another need, one self-serving in

⁶⁵ Arthur Kornhauser, "Power Relationships and the Role of the Social Scientist," in Kornhauser (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 195.

⁶⁶ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 363.

⁶⁷ Neither are they known to be accommodating to investigators of much else about their corporations. Senator Kefauver's antimonopoly subcommittee subpoenaed steel company cost figures, but the companies never complied. And I know of one instance in which an economist, with the approval of the Central Labor Council and the Chamber of Commerce of a large American city, tried to discover the extent to which automated equipment was being introduced by certain companies, only to be told repeatedly by executives of those companies, "If we told you, our competitors would find out."

a more subtle sense. This is the need, especially urgent in these times of big decisions and small people, to allow the possibility of change. James Meisel among others has accused Mills of discouraging attempts to change the state of affairs by prophesying, in a self-fulfilling manner, their failure.⁸⁸ The pluralists, on the other hand, seem to save the validity of politics by adducing the "slack."

"Slack," notice, is not seen with regard to the scopes I have referred to as important; it appears rather in the interstices of large scope power. The hypothesis is that, because many groups contend for power, there is therefore a "balance of power" which justly satisfies many existing demands and permits the assertion of new ones. But different groups contending for supremacy does not mean that their respective powers balance out.

The local pluralists assert or imply the contrary when they blame the apathetic for their apathy. For if power is easily accumulated, they indicate, it is only the will of the powerless that is lacking. Despite their methodological insistence on linking power with scope, at a crucial moment they neglect the scope of power accessible to those without great resources. They are liberals, in that they affirm the validity of grass-roots interest-group politics, but their liberalism is deflected from the core of power over *important* scopes.

THE URGENCY OF AN ALTERNATIVE

What would an alternative theory require? First, a sense of which social decisions are important, in terms of their effects on people; and how to measure that importance. In most cases these will be "private," not "public" decisions. Second, a notion of power that is rigorous yet dynamic—that describes the present, allows for change within the ordered system of power, but also suggests the possibilities for transforming the large-scale structure of power (not just power with respect to small, discrete scopes). The pluralist approach neither describes the experience of the present nor tolerates broad-gauged, structural change.

A serious alternate outlook would single out just those scopes of power with respect to which the power balance must and can be shifted. We would ask, How can fundamental power relations be altered?—not, How is small-gauged influence exchanged in the nooks and crannies of

⁸⁸ James Meisel, *The Myth of the Ruling Class*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1958), pp. 360–65.

the established order?—and not just, Who runs things? We would inquire into the mechanisms of social control—that power that forestalls attempts at changing the distribution of power—as well as those of influence, and into their limits as well.

The problem of localized power was never academic. In the pluralist version, the existing span of power relations is defended as essentially just. In the standard stratification version, elites are exposed, but the zero-sum, probabilistic definition of power seems to preclude the possibility of democratically shared decision-making. The former speaks to celebration of the *status quo* or over-optimism, the second to despair.

What is needed now, very practically, is a theory that speaks to a strategy for the growing movement of urban and rural poor, and that of students and intellectuals enraged by the quality of education and the ugliness of United States foreign policy. Such a theory would seek pressure points; would ask how resources accumulated by *organization* can be focused on those pressure points, and toward what ends, and with which allies who can lend which resources in exchange for what. It would look seriously at the tactic of withdrawing legitimacy and economic support from the going system and groping toward a new one in the midst of the old: Is this a first real assertion or an abdication of the potential power of the new movements? Answering these questions requires a serious rethinking of our notions of power and change. It should be plain that the matter is far more than academic.

Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz

Two Faces of Power¹

The concept of power remains elusive despite the recent and prolific outpourings of case studies on community power. Its elusiveness is dramatically demonstrated by the regularity of disagreement as to the locus of community power between the sociologists and the political scientists. Sociologically oriented researchers have consistently found that power is highly centralized, while scholars trained in political science have just as regularly concluded that in "their" communities power is widely diffused.² Presumably, this explains why the latter group styles itself "pluralist," its counterpart "elitist."

There seems no room for doubt that the sharply divergent findings of the two groups are the product, not of sheer coincidence, but of fun-

¹This paper is an outgrowth of a seminar in Problems of Power in Contemporary Society, conducted jointly by the authors for graduate students and undergraduate majors in political science and economics.

²Compare, for example, the sociological studies of Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure* (Chapel Hill, 1953); Roland Pellegrini and Charles H. Coates, "Absentee-Owned Corporations and Community Power Structure," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 61 (March 1956), pp. 413-19; and Robert O. Schulze, "Economic Dominants and Community Power Structure," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 23 (February 1958), pp. 3-9; with political science studies of Wallace S. Sayre and Herbert Kaufman, *Governing New York City* (New York, 1960); Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven, 1961); and Norton E. Long and George Belknap, "A Research Program on Leadership and Decision-Making in Metropolitan Areas" (New York, Governmental Affairs Institute, 1956). See also Nelson W. Polsby, "How to Study Community Power: The Pluralist Alternative," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 22 (August, 1960), pp. 474-84.

SOURCE: *The American Political Science Review*, LVI, 4 (December, 1962), 947-952. Reprinted with permission.

Peter Bachrach is professor of political science, and Morton S. Baratz is professor of economics, at Bryn Mawr College.

damental differences in both their underlying assumptions and research methodology. The political scientists have contended that these differences in findings can be explained by faulty approach and presuppositions of the sociologists. We contend with this paper that the pluralists themselves have not grasped the whole truth of the matter; that while their criticisms of the elitists are sound, they, like the elitists, utilize an approach and assumptions which predetermine their conclusions. Our argument is cast within the frame of our central thesis: that there are two faces of power, neither of which the sociologists see and only one of which the political scientists see.

I

Against the elitist approach to power several criticisms may be, and have been, levelled.³ One has to do with its basic premise that in every human institution there is an ordered system of power, a "power structure" which is an integral part and the mirror image of the organization's stratification. This postulate the pluralists emphatically—and, to our mind, correctly—reject, on the ground that

nothing categorical can be assumed about power in any community. . . . If anything, there seems to be an unspoken notion among pluralist researchers that at bottom *nobody* dominates in a town, so that their first question is not likely to be, "Who runs this community?," but rather, "Does anyone at all run this community?" The first query is somewhat like, "Have you stopped beating your wife?," in that virtually any response short of total unwillingness to answer will supply the researchers with a "power elite" along the lines presupposed by the stratification theory.⁴

Equally objectionable to the pluralists—and to us—is the sociologists' hypothesis that the power structure tends to be stable over time.

Pluralists hold that power may be tied to issues, and issues can be fleeting or persistent, provoking coalitions among interest groups and citizens, ranging in their duration from momentary to semi-permanent. . . . To presume that the set of coalitions which exists in the community at any given time is a timelessly stable aspect of social structure is to introduce systematic inaccuracies into one's description of social reality.⁵

A third criticism of the elitist model is that it wrongly equates reputed with actual power:

³ See especially N. W. Polsby, *op. cit.*, p. 475f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 476.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 478–79.

If a man's major life work is banking, the pluralist presumes he will spend his time at the bank, and not in manipulating community decisions. This presumption holds until the banker's activities and participations indicate otherwise. . . . If we presume that the banker is "really" engaged in running the community, there is practically no way of disconfirming this notion, even if it is totally erroneous. On the other hand, it is easy to spot the banker who really *does* run community affairs when we presume he does not, because his activities will make this fact apparent.⁶

This is not an exhaustive bill of particulars; there are flaws other than these in the sociological model and methodology⁷—including some which the pluralists themselves have not noticed. But to go into this would not materially serve our current purposes. Suffice it simply to observe that whatever the merits of their own approach to power, the pluralists have effectively exposed the main weaknesses of the elitist model.

As the foregoing quotations make clear, the pluralists concentrate their attention, not upon the sources of power, but its exercise. Power to them means "participation in decision-making"⁸ and can be analyzed only after "careful examination of a series of concrete decisions."⁹ As a result, the pluralist researcher is uninterested in the reputedly powerful. His concerns instead are to (a) select for study a number of "key" as opposed to "routine" political decisions, (b) identify the people who took an active part in the decision-making process, (c) obtain a full account of their actual behavior while the policy conflict was being resolved, and (d) determine and analyze the specific outcome of the conflict.

The advantages of this approach, relative to the elitist alternative, need no further exposition. The same may not be said, however, about its defects—two of which seem to us to be of fundamental importance. One is that the model takes no account of the fact that power may be, and often is, exercised by confining the scope of decision-making to relatively "safe" issues. The other is that the model provides no *objective*

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 480–81.

⁷ See especially Robert A. Dahl, "A Critique of the Ruling-Elite Model," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 52 (June 1958), pp. 463–69; and Lawrence J. R. Herson, "In the Footsteps of Community Power," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 55 (December 1961), pp. 817–31.

⁸ This definition originated with Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, *Power and Society* (New Haven, 1950), p. 75.

⁹ Robert A. Dahl, "A Critique of the Ruling-Elite Model," *loc. cit.*, p. 466.

criteria for distinguishing between "important" and "unimportant" issues arising in the political arena.

II

There is no gainsaying that an analysis grounded entirely upon what is specific and visible to the outside observer is more "scientific" than one based upon pure speculation. To put it another way,

If we can get our social life stated in terms of activity, and of nothing else, we have not indeed succeeded in measuring it, but we have at least reached a foundation upon which a coherent system of measurements can be built up. . . . We shall cease to be blocked by the intervention of unmeasurable elements, which claim to be themselves the real causes of all that is happening, and which by their spook-like arbitrariness make impossible any progress toward dependable knowledge.¹⁰

The question is, however, how can one be certain in any given situation that the "unmeasurable elements" are inconsequential, are not of decisive importance? Cast in slightly different terms, can a sound concept of power be predicated on the assumption that power is totally embodied and fully reflected in "concrete decisions" or in activity bearing directly upon their making?

We think not. Of course power is exercised when A participates in the making of decisions that affect B. But power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A. To the extent that A succeeds in doing this, B is prevented, for all practical purposes, from bringing to the fore any issues that might in their resolution be seriously detrimental to A's set of preferences.¹¹

Situations of this kind are common. Consider, for example, the

¹⁰ Arthur Bentley, *The Process of Government* (Chicago, 1908), p. 202, quoted in Polsby, *op. cit.*, p. 481 n.

¹¹ As is perhaps self-evident, there are similarities in both faces of power. In each, A participates in decisions and thereby adversely affects B. But there is an important difference between the two: in the one case, A openly participates; in the other, he participates only in the sense that he works to sustain those values and rules of procedure that help him keep certain issues out of the public domain. True enough, participation of the second kind may at times be overt; that is the case, for instance, in cloture fights in the Congress. But the point is that it need not be. In fact, when the maneuver is most successfully executed, it neither involves nor can be identified with decisions arrived at on specific issues.

case—surely not unfamiliar to this audience—of the discontented faculty member in an academic institution headed by a tradition-bound executive. Aggrieved about a long-standing policy around which a strong vested interest has developed, the professor resolves in the privacy of his office to launch an attack upon the policy at the next faculty meeting. But, when the moment of truth is at hand, he sits frozen in silence. Why? Among the many possible reasons, one or more of these could have been of crucial importance: (a) the professor was fearful that his intended action would be interpreted as an expression of his disloyalty to the institution; or (b) he decided that, given the beliefs and attitudes of his colleagues on the faculty, he would almost certainly constitute on this issue a minority of one; or (c) he concluded that, given the nature of the law-making process in the institution, his proposed remedies would be pigeonholed permanently. But whatever the case, the central point to be made is the same: to the extent that a person or group—consciously or unconsciously—creates or reinforces barriers to the public airing of policy conflicts, that person or group has power. Or, as Professor Schattschneider has so admirably put it:

~ All forms of political organization have a bias in favor of the exploitation of some kinds of conflict and the suppression of others because *organization is the mobilization of bias*. Some issues are organized into politics while others organized out.¹²

Is such bias not relevant to the study of power? Should not the student be continuously alert to its possible existence in the human institution that he studies, and be ever prepared to examine the forces which brought it into being and sustain it? Can he safely ignore the possibility, for instance, that an individual or group in a community participates more vigorously in supporting the *nondecision-making* process than in participating in actual decisions within the process? Stated differently, can the researcher overlook the chance that some person or association could limit decision-making to relatively non-controversial matters, by influencing community values and political procedures and rituals, notwithstanding that there are in the community serious but latent power conflicts? ¹³ To do so is, in our judgment, to overlook the less apparent, but nonetheless extremely important, face of power.

¹² E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People* (New York, 1960), p. 71.

¹³ Dahl *partially* concedes this point when he observes ("A Critique of the Ruling-Elite Model," pp. 468–69) that "one could argue that even in a society like ours a ruling elite might be so influential over ideas, attitudes, and opinions

III

In his critique of the "ruling-elite model," Professor Dahl argues that "the hypothesis of the existence of a ruling elite can be strictly tested only if . . . [t]here is a fair sample of cases involving key political decisions in which the preferences of the hypothetical ruling elite run counter to those of any other likely group that might be suggested."¹⁴ With this assertion we have two complaints. One we have already discussed, viz., in erroneously assuming that power is solely reflected in concrete decisions, Dahl thereby excludes the possibility that in the community in question there is a group capable of preventing contests from arising on issues of importance to it. Beyond that, however, by ignoring the less apparent face of power Dahl and those who accept his pluralist approach are unable adequately to differentiate between a "key" and a "routine" political decision.

Nelson Polsby, for example, proposes that "by pre-selecting as issues for study those which are generally agreed to be significant, pluralist researchers can test stratification theory."¹⁵ He is silent, however, on how the researcher is to determine *what* issues are "generally agreed to be significant," and on how the researcher is to appraise the reliability of the agreement. In fact, Polsby is guilty here of the same fault he himself has found with elitist methodology: by presupposing that in any community there are significant issues in the political arena, he takes for granted the very question which is in doubt. He accepts as issues what are reputed to be issues. As a result, his findings are fore-ordained. For even if there is no "truly" significant issue in the community under study, there is every likelihood that Polsby (or any like-minded researcher) will find one or some and, after careful study, reach the appropriate pluralistic conclusions.¹⁶

that a kind of false consensus will exist—not the phony consensus of a terroristic totalitarian dictatorship but the manipulated and superficially self-imposed adherence to the norms and goals of the elite by broad sections of a community. . . . This objection points to the need to be circumspect in interpreting the evidence." But that he largely misses our point is clear from the succeeding sentence: "Yet here, too, it seems to me that the hypothesis cannot be satisfactorily confirmed without something equivalent to the test I have proposed," and that is "by an examination of a series of concrete cases where key decisions are made. . . ."

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 466. ¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 478.

¹⁶ As he points out, the expectations of the pluralist researchers "have seldom been disappointed." (*Ibid.*, p. 477).

Dahl's definition of "key political issues" in his essay on the ruling-elite model is open to the same criticism. He states that it is "a necessary although possibly not a sufficient condition that the [key] issue should involve actual disagreement in preferences among two or more groups."¹⁷ In our view, this is an inadequate characterization of a "key political issue," simply because groups can have disagreements in preferences on unimportant as well as on important issues. Elite preferences which border on the indifferent are certainly not significant in determining whether a monolithic or polyolithic distribution of power prevails in a given community. Using Dahl's definition of "key political issues," the researcher would have little difficulty in finding such in practically any community; and it would not be surprising then if he ultimately concluded that power in the community was widely diffused.

The distinction between important and unimportant issues, we believe, cannot be made intelligently in the absence of an analysis of the "mobilization of bias" in the community; of the dominant values and the political myths, rituals, and institutions which tend to favor the vested interests of one or more groups, relative to others. Armed with this knowledge, one could conclude that any challenge to the predominant values or to the established "rules of the game" would constitute an "important" issue; all else, unimportant. To be sure, judgments of this kind cannot be entirely objective. But to avoid making them in a study of power is both to neglect a highly significant aspect of power and thereby to undermine the only sound basis for discriminating between "key" and "routine" decisions. In effect, we contend, the pluralists have made each of these mistakes; that is to say, they have done just that for which Kaufman and Jones so severely taxed Floyd Hunter: they have begun "their structure at the mezzanine without showing us a lobby or foundation,"¹⁸ i.e., they have begun by studying the issues rather than the values and biases that are built into the political system and that, for the student of power, give real meaning to those issues which do enter the political arena.

IV

There is no better fulcrum for our critique of the pluralist model than Dahl's recent study of power in New Haven.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 467.

¹⁸ Herbert Kaufman and Victor Jones, "The Mystery of Power," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 14 (Summer 1954), p. 207.

¹⁹ Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven, 1961).

At the outset it may be observed that Dahl does not attempt in this work to define his concept, "key political decision." In asking whether the "Notables" of New Haven are "influential overtly or covertly in the making of government decisions," he simply states that he will examine "three different 'issue-areas' in which important public decisions are made: nominations by the two political parties, urban redevelopment, and public education." These choices are justified on the grounds that "nominations determine which persons will hold public office. The New Haven redevelopment program measured by its cost—present and potential—is the largest in the country. Public education, aside from its intrinsic importance, is the costliest item in the city's budget." Therefore, Dahl concludes, "It is reasonable to expect . . . that the relative influence over public officials wielded by the . . . Notables would be revealed by an examination of their participation in these three areas of activity."²⁰

The difficulty with this latter statement is that it is evident from Dahl's own account that the Notables are in fact uninterested in two of the three "key" decisions he has chosen. In regard to the public school issue, for example, Dahl points out that many of the Notables live in the suburbs and that those who do live in New Haven choose in the main to send their children to private schools. "As a consequence," he writes, "their interest in the public schools is ordinarily rather slight."²¹ Nominations by the two political parties as an important "issue-area" is somewhat analogous to the public schools, in that the apparent lack of interest among the Notables in this issue is partially accounted for by their suburban residence—because of which they are disqualified from holding public office in New Haven. Indeed, Dahl himself concedes that with respect to both these issues the Notables are largely indifferent: "Business leaders might ignore the public schools or the political parties without any sharp awareness that their indifference would hurt their pocketbooks . . ." He goes on, however, to say that

the prospect of profound changes [as a result of the urban-redevelopment program] in ownership, physical layout, and usage of property in the downtown area and the effects of these changes on the commercial and industrial prosperity of New Haven were all related in an obvious way to the daily concerns of businessmen.²²

Thus, if one believes—as Professor Dahl did when he wrote his critique of the ruling-elite model—that an issue, to be considered as important,

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 64. ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70. ²² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

"should involve actual disagreement in preferences among two or more groups,"²³ then clearly he has now for all practical purposes written off public education and party nominations as key "issue-areas." But this point aside, it appears somewhat dubious at best that "the relative influence over public officials wielded by the Social Notables" can be revealed by an examination of their nonparticipation in areas in which they were not interested.

Furthermore, we would not rule out the possibility that even on those issues to which they appear indifferent, the Notables may have a significant degree of *indirect* influence. We would suggest, for example, that although they send their children to private schools, the Notables do recognize that public school expenditures have a direct bearing upon their own tax liabilities. This being so, and given their strong representation on the New Haven Board of Finance,²⁴ the expectation must be that it is in their direct interest to play an active role in fiscal policy-making, in the establishment of the educational budget in particular. But as to this, Dahl is silent: he inquires not at all into either the decisions made by the Board of Finance with respect to education nor into their impact upon the public schools.²⁵ Let it be understood clearly that in making these points we are not attempting to refute Dahl's contention that the Notables lack power in New Haven. What we *are* saying, however, is that this conclusion is not adequately supported by his analysis of the "issue-areas" of public education and party nominations.

The same may not be said of redevelopment. This issue is by any reasonable standard important for purposes of determining whether New Haven is ruled by "the hidden hand of an economic elite."²⁶ For the Economic Notables have taken an active interest in the program

²³ *Op. cit.*, p. 467.

²⁴ *Who Governs?*, p. 82. Dahl points out that "the main policy thrust of the Economic Notables is to oppose tax increases; this leads them to oppose expenditures for anything more than minimal traditional city services. In this effort their two most effective weapons ordinarily are the mayor and the Board of Finance. The policies of the Notables are most easily achieved under a strong mayor if his policies coincide with theirs or under a weak mayor if they have the support of the Board of Finance. . . . New Haven mayors have continued to find it expedient to create confidence in their financial policies among businessmen by appointing them to the Board." (pp. 81-2)

²⁵ Dahl does discuss in general terms (pp. 79-84) changes in the level of tax rates and assessments in past years, but not actual decisions of the Board of Finance or their effects on the public school system.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

and, beyond that, the socio-economic implications of it are not necessarily in harmony with the basic interests and values of businesses and businessmen.

In an effort to assure that the redevelopment program would be acceptable to what he dubbed "the biggest muscles" in New Haven, Mayor Lee created the Citizens Action Commission (CAC) and appointed to it primarily representatives of the economic elite. It was given the function of overseeing the work of the mayor and other officials involved in redevelopment, and, as well, the responsibility for organizing and encouraging citizens' participation in the program through an extensive committee system.

In order to weigh the relative influence of the mayor, other key officials, and the members of the CAC, Dahl reconstructs "all the *important* decisions on redevelopment and renewal between 1950-58 . . . [to] determine which individuals most often initiated the proposals that were finally adopted or most often successfully vetoed the proposals of the others."²⁷ The results of this test indicate that the mayor and his development administrator were by far the most influential, and that the "muscles" on the Commission, excepting in a few trivial instances, "never directly initiated, opposed, vetoed, or altered any proposal brought before them. . . ." ²⁸

This finding is, in our view, unreliable, not so much because Dahl was compelled to make a subjective selection of what constituted *important* decisions within what he felt to be an *important* "issue-area," as because the finding was based upon an excessively narrow test of influence. To measure relative influence solely in terms of the ability to initiate and veto proposals is to ignore the possible exercise of influence or power in limiting the scope of initiation. How, that is to say, can a judgment be made as to the relative influence of Mayor Lee and the CAC without knowing (through prior study of the political and social views of all concerned) the proposals that Lee did *not* make because he anticipated that they would provoke strenuous opposition and, perhaps, sanctions on the part of the CAC? ²⁹

²⁷ *Ibid.* "A rough test of a person's overt or covert influence," Dahl states in the first section of the book, "is the frequency with which he successfully initiates an important policy over the opposition of others, or vetoes policies initiated by others, or initiates a policy where no opposition appears." (p. 66)

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

²⁹ Dahl is, of course, aware of the "law of anticipated reactions." In the case of the mayor's relationship with the CAC, Dahl notes that Lee was "par-

In sum, since he does not recognize *both* faces of power, Dahl is in no position to evaluate the relative influence or power of the initiator and decision-maker, on the one hand, and of those persons, on the other, who may have been indirectly instrumental in preventing potentially dangerous issues from being raised.³⁰ As a result, he unduly emphasizes the importance of initiating, deciding, and vetoing, and in the process casts the pluralist conclusions of his study into serious doubt.

v

We have contended in this paper that a fresh approach to the study of power is called for, an approach based upon a recognition of the two faces of power. Under this approach the researcher would begin—not, as does the sociologist who asks, “Who rules?” nor as does the pluralist who asks, “Does anyone have power?”—but by investigating the particular “mobilization of bias” in the institution under scrutiny. Then, having analyzed the dominant values, the myths and the established political procedures and rules of the game, he would make a careful inquiry into which persons or groups, if any, gain from the existing bias and which, if any, are handicapped by it. Next, he would investigate the dynamics of *nondecision-making*; that is, he would examine the extent to which and the manner in which the *status quo* oriented persons and groups influ-

ticularly skillful in estimating what the CAC could be expected to support or reject.” (p. 137). However, Dahl was not interested in analyzing or appraising to what extent the CAC limited Lee’s freedom of action. Because of his restricted concept of power, Dahl did not consider that the CAC might in this respect have exercised power. That the CAC did not initiate or veto actual proposals by the mayor was to Dahl evidence enough that the CAC was virtually powerless; it might as plausibly be evidence that the CAC was (in itself or in what it represented) so powerful that Lee ventured nothing it would find worth quarreling with.

³⁰ The fact that the initiator of decisions also refrains—because he anticipates adverse reactions—from initiating other proposals does not obviously lessen the power of the agent who limited his initiative powers. Dahl missed this point: “It is,” he writes, “all the more improbable, then, that a secret cabal of Notables dominates the public life of New Haven through means so clandestine that not one of the fifty prominent citizens interviewed in the course of this study—citizens who had participated extensively in various decisions—hinted at the existence of such a cabal. . .” (p. 185).

In conceiving of elite domination exclusively in the form of a conscious cabal exercising the power of decision-making and vetoing, he overlooks a *more* subtle form of domination; one in which those who actually dominate are not conscious of it themselves, simply because their position of dominance has never seriously been challenged.

ence those community values and those political institutions (as, *e.g.*, the unanimity "rule" of New York City's Board of Estimate³¹) which tend to limit the scope of actual decision-making to "safe" issues. Finally, using his knowledge of the restrictive face of power as a foundation for analysis and as a standard for distinguishing between "key" and "routine" political decisions, the researcher would, after the manner of the pluralists, analyze participation in decision-making of concrete issues.

We reject in advance as unimpressive the possible criticism that this approach to the study of power is likely to prove fruitless because it goes beyond an investigation of what is objectively measurable. In reacting against the subjective aspects of the sociological model of power, the pluralists have, we believe, made the mistake of discarding "unmeasurable elements" as unreal. It is ironical that, by so doing, they have exposed themselves to the same fundamental criticism they have so forcefully levelled against the elitists: their approach to and assumptions about power predetermine their findings and conclusions.

³¹ Sayre and Kaufman, *op. cit.*, p. 640. For perceptive study of the "mobilization of bias" in a rural American community, see Arthur Vidich and Joseph Bensman, *Small Town in Mass Society* (Princeton, 1958).

THREE

The New Democracy of the Behavioralists

The four articles in this section are all critical of what they regard as an unsuccessful attempt on the part of the behavioralists to reconstruct the meaning of democracy. It is the contention of these articles that rather than restating or reinterpreting democracy as an unrealized ideal, though a worthy one, the behavioralists have rejected this traditional viewpoint. Instead they have become apologists for the existing oligarchical system, justifying the rule by the few not in the name of a natural superiority but in the name of a new "democracy."

Graeme Duncan and Steven Lukes

The New Democracy

226 One of the most salutary results of this vast accumulation of data on politics has been to discredit the older speculative theorists and utopia-makers.—CHARLES BEARD, 1908

The fact that traditional political theory has been held recently in low esteem can be traced in part to the extension of scientific methods to the study of society. At times this has led to a wholesale rejection of the older subject as value-laden and unscientific.¹ But a number of more sophisticated political scientists have seen some value in the work of speculative political theorists and have condemned, not political theory as such, but a philosophical approach to questions which they thought could best be answered in a more scientific manner. After paying some

¹The general position was well put by Charles Merriam: 'Politics, in short, faces the common problem of passing from rule of thumb to more precise measurement, from the art to the science', quoted in Eulau, Eldersveld, and Janowitz (ed.), *Political Behaviour, a Reader in Theory and Research* (The Free Press, Glencoe, 1956), p. 274. This view is evident throughout this work. For discussion of it, see B. Crick, *The American Science of Politics* (Routledge, London, 1959).

Some writers have a practical and simple view of political theory, as in this statement from William A. Glazer: 'Many of the problems now besetting the world arise from the fact that physicists and engineers know how to combine theory and fact more efficiently than do political scientists and policy makers.' 'The Types and Uses of Political Theory', *Social Research*, Autumn 1955, p. 292. The general methodological questions raised by these views and by some of the claims of the voting behaviour researchers, e.g. Lazarsfeld, are not, however, the subject of this paper.

SOURCE: *Political Studies*, XI, 2 (1963), 156–177. Reprinted with permission of Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Graeme Duncan is senior lecturer in politics at Monash University, Victoria, Australia. Steven Lukes is a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford University.

homage to the older theory, they have argued that its abstract notions and principles misdescribe the ways in which men behave and societies function. As a result, attempts have been made to confront certain traditional theories with the facts of political life, and to carry through a substantial revision of these theories. Nowhere has this confrontation and revision advanced further than in the field of democratic theory, which has been examined from the new perspective afforded by research into voting behaviour. Armed with material from the voting studies, Bernard Berelson and others have hastened to declare that past democratic theory is in many respects patently unrealistic and have tried therefore to produce a new and more adequate theory of democracy.²

Berelson, probably the most influential of these writers, has sought explicitly to confront normative theory with empirical research, to their mutual advantage. He suggests in particular that political theorists

might explore the relevance, the implications, and the meaning of such empirical facts as are contained in this and similar studies. Political theory written with reference to practice has the advantage that its categories are the categories in which political life really occurs . . . empirical research can help to clarify the standards and correct the empirical presuppositions of normative theory.³

Such an aim sounds unexceptionable and, if fulfilled, might be expected to increase men's understanding of society. It is not our intention to deny that voting behaviour research can be useful in this respect, although its results do seem to have been disappointingly meagre. But

² We are mainly concerned with those who give detailed consideration to empirical findings in reformulating democratic theory. The main references are: Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, *Voting* (University of Chicago Press, 1954), especially chapter 14 (hereafter referred to as Berelson (1)); B. Berelson, 'Democratic Theory and Public Opinion', *Public Opinion Quarterly* vol. 16, Autumn 1952, and reprinted in Eulau *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-15 (hereafter, Berelson (2)); Milne and Mackenzie, *Marginal Seat, 1955* (The Hansard Society for Parliamentary Government, 1958), chapter 13; S. M. Lipset, Political Man (Heinemann, London, 1960), *passim*; and R. A. Dahl, 'Hierarchy, Democracy and Bargaining in Politics and Economics', reprinted in Eulau *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-90. See also: Talcott Parsons, 'Voting and the Equilibrium of the American Political System', and Eugene Burdick, 'Political Theory and the Voting Studies', in *American Voting Behaviour*, ed. Burdick and Brodbeck (The Free Press, Glencoe, 1960), chapters 4 and 6; J. A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (Allen & Unwin, 1950) 3rd edn., part iv; J. P. Plamenatz, 'Electoral Studies and Democratic Theory', *Political Studies*, vol. vi, 1958, pp. 1-9; and W. H. Morris-Jones, 'In Defence of Apathy', *Political Studies*, vol. ii, 1954, pp. 25-37.

³ Berelson (1), *op. cit.*, p. 306.

we do wish to argue that the actual revision of democratic theory that has been attempted has considerably less justification than Berelson's general statement might suggest. In the first place, the writers with whom we are concerned misunderstand the nature of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century democratic theories,⁴ which were not, nor did they purport to be, descriptions of the way in which people actually behaved. Moreover, the older theories are not usually considered in sufficient detail to show which theorists are being subjected to criticism. In the second place, the new theory of democracy, which seems to be founded upon facts, has serious though hidden shortcomings. It is, as we hope to show in the second part, loosely formulated and sometimes superficial, and it rests upon a vague notion of equilibrium and a priori assumptions about the self-adjusting powers of the 'system'. In the face of the failure of men to meet the classical norms, it provides a new set of norms, the chief among them apathy, which are much closer to realization in present-day America and Britain. Those whom we describe as theorists of the new democracy are not all equally inadequate and complacent, but they use similar arguments and the general direction of their thought is towards an easy acceptance of the existing order. This, as we will suggest in the final section, is partly due to their fear of ideology and resulting preoccupation with the supposed conditions of a stable and non-totalitarian political system, which leads them to reject outright the old democratic vision of a community of participating members, in its various forms. Not only are the stated reasons for such a rejection inadequate; it can still reasonably be argued that the realization of this vision, in one form or another, remains a desirable goal of social and political activity.

I

There are a number of different strands in classical democratic theory and it cannot therefore be characterized simply. Its major exponents differ over both the institutional requirements for democracy and the arguments which can best be urged in its favour. It is true to say, however, that in general a democratic society is treated as one in which all the citizens (the people) continuously and actively participate

⁴There are, of course, dangers in generalizing in this way, and we hope to bring out some of the differences as our argument develops. The main works considered are Rousseau's *Social Contract*, James Mill's *Essay on Government* and J. S. Mill's *Representative Government*.

in the various community affairs, and above all in political affairs.⁵ A democratic society, whether conceived on the Greek model, as by Rousseau, or on a national basis, as by John Stuart Mill, is pre-eminently a society marked by wide discussion and consultation, so that the whole people know the reasons for political decisions through taking part directly or indirectly in their formulation. J. S. Mill, whom we choose as the central democratic theorist because of his concern with representative government, as well as for his clarity, put the argument for widespread participation clearly. He wrote that

the only government which can fully satisfy all the exigencies of the social state is one in which the whole people participate; that any participation, even in the smallest public function, is useful; that the participation should everywhere be as great as the general degree of improvement of the community will allow, and that nothing less can be ultimately desirable than the admission of all to a share in the sovereign power of the state.⁶

Mill proclaimed the need for general participation in a wide variety of affairs, not all of which were specifically political, and related this to his ideal of self-development.

The extension of the franchise and frequent elections, which have been central demands at least in English and American democratic theory, were supported for a number of reasons: that only the vote can reveal the general interest of the community; that it is a natural right, or a right deriving from the rendering of services; that powerful groups or interests must be absorbed into society rather than driven into violent action against established institutions; that the vote is necessary for self-protection; and that it, along with other forms of participation in the life of the nation, elevates those who possess it.⁷ The most important for the

⁵ Participation was not always limited to specifically political activities. Mill, in particular, wrote in *The Political Economy* that 'all classes of the community, down to the very lowest, should have much to do for themselves and should be encouraged to manage as many as possible of their joint concerns by voluntary co-operation'.

⁶ *Representative Government* (Everyman), p. 217.

⁷ This is not an exhaustive list of the arguments which have been urged in support of democracy. Others might be added: e.g., that the vote is a good means of informing the government of specific areas of dissatisfaction, that the expertise of administrators can be controlled by the wisdom of the plain man, that the election allows the government to calculate the limits to its possible activity, and so on.

purposes of our analysis are the last two, which are also those least objectionable to modern democratic thinkers.⁸

The Utilitarians, disturbed at the ease with which governments became the property of 'sinister interests', developed one of the characteristic democratic arguments. The most difficult problem for government (which arises naturally from their psychological premises) is that of 'restraining those in whose hands are lodged the powers necessary for the protection of all, from making a bad use of it'.⁹ Assuming that self-preference is unrestrained by social feelings, the only means of bringing about a rough identity between the interests of community and ruler are 'artificial'—widening the electorate and limiting the duration of governmental power by frequent elections. J. S. Mill, who believed like his father in the natural tendency of rulers to misuse their power, traced this tendency to a deficiency of understanding rather than to mere ill-will and selfishness. Rulers are less ill-disposed than ignorant. Only the man himself can adequately judge and safeguard his own interests—'in the absence of its natural defenders, the interest of the excluded is always in danger of being overlooked'.¹⁰ Constant vigilance and general participation ensure that all interests will be considered and thus that greater justice will prevail in the settlement of claims.

For the younger Mill, however, the franchise was more than a weapon against arbitrary power and a means whereby each group could ensure that its claims were adequately considered. Although he feared that an enfranchised working class would misuse its powers and suggested certain safeguards to secure the authority of the enlightened, he had great faith in the civilizing effects of political participation itself. He described the franchise as 'a potent instrument of mental improvement' and followed Tocqueville in explaining the conscientious citizenship of the Americans by their democratic institutions. Self-government is in this sense self-sustaining: through the possession of legal rights men become capable of properly exercising them and thus they approach that moral autonomy which is the true end of life.

⁸ Political sociology has not eliminated the tendency to argue the case for democracy in the old terms, though some space may be given to *élite* theorists, e.g., Mosca and Pareto, in passing. Cf. J. H. Hallowell, *The Moral Foundation of Democracy* (University of Chicago Press, 1954); N. Micklem, *The Idea of Liberal Democracy* (London, 1957), A. Ross, *Why Democracy?* (Massachusetts, 1952), for a restatement of some of the traditional arguments. Christian beliefs are important in the first two of these.

⁹ James Mill, *Essay on Government* (Cambridge, 1937), p. 6.

¹⁰ *Representative Government*, p. 209.

Those who have, like Mill and Rousseau, gone beyond self-protection and the possibility of peaceful change as the chief advantages of the democratic form of government, have tended to speak in terms of man's realization of some characteristic excellence. The democratic society is the good society, bringing out the best in men; democracy, as Lindsay said, is a theory of society as well as a theory of government. Rousseau, who idealizes only direct or 'populistic' democracy, eliminates conflict, since when men rationally seek the common good, which is ascertainable, there are no possible grounds for disagreement between them; whereas Mill pictures a community of critical, restless, dissatisfied individuals, constantly questioning one another's principles in the pursuit of truth and the general happiness. They evaluate differently 'long debates, discussion and tumult'.

Voting, as the chief institutional means of participation, becomes of crucial importance. It is conceived, not as a spasmodic or casual act, but as one in which rationality and disinterestedness are manifest. Rousseau wrote that when the people are called to vote upon a law, what 'it' is asked 'is not exactly whether it approves or rejects the proposal, but whether it is in conformity with the general will, which is their will. Each man in giving his vote states his opinion on that point, and the general will is found by counting the votes'.¹¹ Mill had a similarly high conception of the act of voting, though it is not linked so strongly with the notion of an ascertainable common good. In his words, 'the voter is under an absolute moral obligation to consider the interests of the public, not his private, advantage and to give his vote, to the best of his judgment, exactly as he would be bound to do if he were the sole voter and the election depended upon him alone'.¹²

To the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century democratic theorists, voting was perhaps the citizen's most important act, in which the people as a whole were to reveal their political energy and virtue. It was to be the culmination of long, thoughtful, and fair consideration of the relevant issues. But these writers never claimed to be simply describing existing reality, for they were elaborating, at least in part, a set of ideals for a democratic society, which were also meant to be operative ideals for their own times. They have been taken to task, however, for 'utopianism' and for making demands on the ordinary man that are impossible and indeed undesirable. Research into voting behavior—who votes,

¹¹ *The Social Contract* (Everyman), p. 88.

¹² *Representative Government*, p. 300.

how and why? who does not vote and why not?—would seem to have confirmed abundantly the old impressionistic conservative arguments about the ‘bovine stupidity’ and the ‘heavy, lumpish acquiescence’ of the mass electorate and to have shown the democratic hope to be a mere delusion, based on false intellectualist assumptions about human nature.

The voting studies¹³ generally agree in showing that the voters fail to satisfy most of the traditional requirements of democracy. This is, perhaps, not too surprising, but detailed documentation of voting behaviour by panel study is certainly of value in confirming suspicions. Berelson gives a composite list of the qualities demanded by the older democratic theorists and confronts them with the actual qualities as revealed in the opinion surveys. Involvement, participation, and the sharing of responsibility were held to be virtues; disinterest and apathy were not approved. In fact, the evidence, says Berelson, shows that less than one-third of the electorate is really interested in politics, many vote without real involvement, open discussion and motives for participation are almost non-existent. Secondly, knowledge and information are inadequate. ‘One persistent conclusion is that the public is not particularly well-informed about the specific issues of the day’.¹⁴ Even when voters are well-informed, their knowledge reinforces inclinations more than it contributes to a ‘free’ decision. Nor do voters seem to vote on principles, of whatever kind, which they have considered carefully, and the standards which they do use are often irrelevant to ‘the major problems of the age’. Finally, voters do not seem to decide rationally, in any of the traditional senses of that porous term. The studies have noted the prevalence of selective perception and the way in which the campaign reinforces the influence of a whole set of environmental factors, so that in the end its function seems to be largely that of ‘activating latent predispositions’. Furthermore, the voters showing the greatest degree of ‘open-mindedness’, that is, the changers or floaters, are, in some of the studies at least, shown to be the most cross-pressured, the least inter-

¹³ See especially Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, *The People's Choice* (Duell, Sloan and Pearce, New York, 1944); Berelson (1), *op. cit.*; Campbell, Gurin, and Miller, *The Voter Decides* (Row, Riterson & Co., Evanston, 1954); Campbell *et al.*, *The American Voter* (Wiley & Sons, Michigan, 1960); Milne and Mackenzie, *op. cit.*; Benney, Gray, and Pear, *How People Vote* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956). For a convenient survey of the findings, see Lipset, *op. cit.*, though this tends to be somewhat cavalier in interpretation and generalization.

¹⁴ Berelson (2), p. 109.

ested and the least politically capable.¹⁵ In brief, the voter is shown to be deficient in most of the ideal qualities of traditional democratic theory.

Before detailed research into voting behaviour had ever taken place, several writers (for instance, Lord Bryce and Graham Wallas) had rejected much of the old and largely *a priori* account of the rational democratic citizen as a description applicable to the bulk of their fellow-citizens, yet they did not feel it necessary on this account to undertake a complete revision of democratic theory, as is now demanded.¹⁶ Some more recent writers have, on the other hand, held on to the notion of the rational citizen as applicable, despite the evidence of the voting surveys. The impact of these has been lessened by the claim that the short-term questionnaire method is too clumsy to elicit the important truths about the voter.¹⁷ Schumpeter suggests a distinction between rationality in thought and rationality in action. The latter 'may be present without any conscious deliberation and irrespective of any ability to formulate the rationale of one's action correctly. The observer, particularly the observer who uses interview and questionnaire methods, often overlooks this and hence acquires an exaggerated idea of the importance of irrationality in behaviour.'¹⁸ Plamenatz¹⁹ draws a similar distinction between what men do and their awareness of the significance of their actions. He suggests that voters may be condemned by inarticulateness or private language to seem less reasonable than they in fact are, at least in the present state of interview techniques. It is true that men's ability to put thoughts into words and describe actions differs, and that there may be good reasons, of which the agent is unaware, for his doing what he does (for instance, many traditional forms of behaviour). It is almost certain that the survey methods used do give a distorted picture of the complex reality that they seek to describe. But, as so far stated, these objections can serve only as a general warning and, if pressed, may easily develop into a mystical faith in the good sense of the common

¹⁵ However, for an elaborate critique of the Anglo-American treatment of this problem see H. Daudt, *Floating Voters and the Floating Vote* (Stenfert Kroese, Leiden, 1961).

¹⁶ Schumpeter attacks Wallas on precisely these grounds, see Schumpeter, *op. cit.*, p. 256, n. 7. He declares that Wallas's analysis should have led to a more drastic revision of the classical doctrine than it in fact did.

¹⁷ This point is made by Key, 'The Politically Relevant in Surveys', *Public Opinion Quarterly* (1960).

¹⁸ Schumpeter, *op. cit.*, p. 259, n. 11. ¹⁹ *Op. cit.*

man. This criticism of the panel surveys is not, in any case, central to our purposes. The authors with whom we are mainly concerned accept the soundness of the survey findings and demand in consequence a substantial revision of classical democratic theory.

Berelson writes: 'Perhaps the main impact of realistic research on contemporary politics has been to temper some of the requirements set by our traditional normative theory for the typical citizen.'²⁰ The clearest statement of the nature of the revision comes, however, from Robert Dahl. He writes that

we must conclude that the classic assumptions about the need for citizen participation in democracy were, at the very least, inadequate. If one regards political equality in the making of decisions as a kind of limit to be achieved, then it is axiomatic that this limit could only be arrived at with the complete participation of every adult citizen. Nevertheless, *what we call 'democracy'*—that is, a system of decision-making in which the leaders are more or less responsive to the preferences of non-leaders—does seem to operate with a relatively low level of citizen participation. Hence it is inaccurate to say that one of the necessary conditions for 'democracy' is extensive citizen participation.²¹

Not only is Dahl's definition of democracy extremely loose (in what political system are leaders not more or less responsive to non-leaders?) but the rejection of the classical requirement of participation rests upon an obvious redefinition of democracy, in which what are taken for present-day facts supplant the ideal. Dahl's conclusion is an obvious *non sequitur*, involving a slide from 'what we call "democracy"' to 'democracy'. He suspects that it may have represented a 'kind of ideal limit', but in restating the requirements of the system he ignores this central element of the old democracy, which was defined and justified as a system in which all participate. Without further argument it is misleading to claim that facts can simply refute ideals and demand changes in the essential requirements of a normative theory, or to reject (for example) Mill's democracy by means of a tacit redefinition of the notion. It needs, moreover, to be established that the new democracy, 'what we call "democracy"' is democratic in a sense acceptable to traditional theory.

This brings us to the central point in the first part of our analysis: that although what may now be called 'democracies' may function with little rationality, interest, or participation on the part of the majority of

²⁰ Berelson (1), *op. cit.*, p. 306.

²¹ Dahl, *op. cit.*, p. 87 (our emphasis).

citizens, this cannot count simply as a refutation of largely normative theories, which were centrally concerned with the quality of men's social life and not only with the functioning of a 'political system'. Dahl again provides the most explicit statement:

One of the most interesting developments of the past century is the full-blown contrast that has arisen between the assumptions of many of the older democratic theorists and what now appear to be the actual facts of political life. *Yet if classical theory is demonstrably invalid in some crucial respects*, it is not so clear how we are to go about constructing theoretical models to replace the older ones.²²

To claim that sociological findings can show these older political theories to be demonstrably invalid is to seriously misunderstand the most basic features of much political theory, which often touches reality only at the edges, and is only at that point open to empirical refutation. 'Political theory' is a general term which covers different types of statements and theories which yield conclusions of different sorts in different ways, and are therefore open to objection in different ways.²³

In this connexion, a familiar distinction can be made at the most general level between 'normative' theories, which present and elaborate goals and ideals, and 'empirical' theories, which describe and explain political reality. A theory of the first kind involves some vision of the Good Life and the Good Society, resting ultimately on a view of human nature and on assumptions about human needs and potentialities; two obvious examples are Plato's republic and Rousseau's ideal community. These ideals almost always conflict with existing realities, though they need not do so (cf. the later Hegel). Empirical theories, however, start from a set of explanatory concepts and classifications, which are then employed, in a number of markedly different ways, in describing and explaining political reality. They are descriptions, concerned with given societies, and they are not primarily moral critiques of them.

This general distinction is, of course, a formal one: these kinds of theory are often intimately connected, with each closely dependent on

²² *Ibid.*, p. 86 (our emphasis). Dahl's *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago, 1956) is, however, a more sophisticated formulation.

²³ '... any clear-headed theory of politics requires discrimination between states of fact, causal connections, formal implications, and the values or ends that a policy is designed to achieve. In any political philosophy all these factors are combined, but no combination can alter the fact that they are logically different and that conclusions about them are differently warranted.' G. H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (Holt, New York, 2nd edn., 1950), p. ix.

the other. Few empirical theories avoid value-judgments, whether or not they are explicit, and the vision of a normative theory generally rests upon a particular assessment of the present and past. The ideal may involve a moral estimate of the explanatory concepts, particularly if the ideal is of a kind that is supposedly being progressively realized in history, while empirical study may put ideals in a new light, as when the discovery of trends or movements in existing societies curbs the utopian fancy.

Most of the traditional theories of democracy were largely, if not primarily, normative, and critical of the societies in which they were conceived. They were essentially concerned with the achievement in society of what were regarded as various desirable human ends—liberty, good government, responsibility, moral autonomy, self-realization, and so on—and with the means, including the franchise and general participation in politics, but also education and wise leadership, which could best contribute to these ends. Rousseau and I. S. Mill had serious doubts about the feasibility of their ideals, because of the corruptibility of the multitude, or the power of vested interests, or the sheer extent of societies. Mill had some sympathy with those reformers who favoured despotism because of 'the impediments imposed to the most salutary public improvements by the ignorance, the indifference, the intractableness, the perverse obstinacy of a people, and the corrupt combinations of selfish private interests armed with the powerful weapons afforded by free institutions'.²⁴ He feared that the extension of democracy would endanger good government and relied upon a variety of institutional devices to secure a privileged position for the educated, hoping, like his father, that the influence of the wise would spread to the community as a whole. Rousseau, similarly, has a long list of the conditions for the realization of his ideal community, and he was very pessimistic about most of the societies of his time. In choosing democracy the classical theorists were in general aware of the ease with which it could be forestalled and perverted, though they were not without illusions; and they were aware, too, of the capacity of undemocratic societies to

²⁴ *Representative Government*, p. 206. Mill devoted a great deal of attention to the possible dangers to good government resulting from the extension of the franchise to the working class, e.g. in 'Democracy in America' in *Dissertations and Discussions*, vol. II, pp. 1–83, *passim*. He wrote that a labouring class prematurely given political power might easily interfere with contracts, introducing 'unenlightened legislation for the supposed interests of the many; laws founded on mistakes in political economy'. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

survive. Their theories are a critique of reality in terms of a vision of human nature and possibilities, and for this reason cannot simply be refuted on the grounds that people do not satisfy the required standards and that *soi-disant* 'democracies' none the less survive. Their ideals can logically contrast with the facts without being invalidated by empirical research, which does not in any *obvious* way call for their general revision. The term 'democracy' may perhaps legitimately be used to describe political systems like that of the contemporary United States, but it is wrong to assume that the validity of that theory of democracy in which general participation is central to the very notion itself is thereby destroyed.

All this is not, however, to say that evidence can never force doubts about the feasibility of their ideals, because of the corruptive.²⁵ If such a theory seems intolerably remote from reality, it may be charged with utopianism. It is an endemic danger of normative political theory that it will maintain what Dewey called 'an immune and monastic impeccability'. A particular ideal or set of ideals may, in the Marxist sense, be condemned by historical forces to sterility; it might be shown that it is realizable, but only at the cost of further consequences which violate it; it might itself be shown to be incompatible with other important values; it might be shown that the conditions of realization of an ideal are too vast or unexpected for men to endure; or else it may be shown to be literally impossible to effect the changes demanded. All these means of casting doubt on the feasibility of ideals are legitimate weapons to be used by sceptics; the effectiveness of each is clearly open to dispute, particularly in the case of the last two. For men may disagree about the degree to which social circumstances affect attitudes and behaviour and thus about the extent to which any given traits are alterable. (To what extent, for example, is the lack of a sense of responsibility a function of a social situation?) Nevertheless, the use of any of these forms of objection needs to be fully and extensively pursued, and it needs to be shown exactly how and why the ideal is rendered improbable or impossible of attainment. This has nowhere been done. Thus, when it is stated baldly that the old theory made impossible demands, this is more like the recognition of a complacent or despairing abandonment of an ideal than the proof that that ideal must

²⁵ For a very illuminating discussion of this problem and with particular reference to our concerns see W. G. Runciman, 'Sociological Evidence and Political Theory', in *Philosophy, Politics and Society: Second Series*, ed. Laslett and Runciman (Blackwell, Oxford, 1962).

needs be abandoned. And it should be realized that, unless one takes a crude historicist position, this proof could only be really convincing if one could show that traditional democratic theory made demands which men are by nature unable to satisfy. Only then would the ideal be literally *invalidated*, for it would have been shown that the obstacles to its realization are irremovable. Such a demonstration would presumably come from social psychology, but it has certainly not been achieved, nor is it likely to be even possible until that study is very much further advanced. Only then could the facts (about human nature) even in principle serve to invalidate the old theories of democracy. Otherwise, one can certainly argue over its *feasibility* in the light of case studies—from Michels onwards. Even so, it seems that very little has been done to show that the classical democratic ideals are manifestly utopian. It is not, to repeat, our point that normative political theory is simply independent of sociological evidence; obviously, any theory of democracy must take into account the main features of actual societies. It is simply that empirical study and analysis can only in certain specified cases actually compel us to abandon the ideal or transform it out of all recognition.

Finally, it ought to be added that research into voting behaviour has performed the valuable service of destroying some popular myths about the actual functioning of elections—myths which exist at the level of public rhetoric rather than that of political theory. The ‘*mandate*’ theory, for example, has been damaged beyond repair by the voting studies (though by much else besides): as the authors of *The American Voter* put it, ‘The thinness of the electorate’s understanding of concrete policy alternatives—its inability to respond to government and politics at this level—helps explain why it is that efforts to interpret a national election in terms of a policy mandate are speculative, contradictory and inconclusive’.²⁶ Similarly, many of the studies have thrown into question the notion of the independent or ‘floating’ voter, a kind of rational jellyfish, preferably of the middle class, floating one way or the other to decide the issue. At these and probably other points the election studies have refuted or at least modified some simple and widely believed theories about what happens in elections: the ‘business vocabulary’ for describing actual elections has at least been purged. But these low-level and non-critical theories are open to support and objection in this simple way, whereas the old ideal of democratic man is not.

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 544.

II

It has been generally agreed that the theory of the whole electorate as politically competent and interested, expressing these qualities in democratic elections, has not proved suitable as a basis for empirical analysis. The lack of realism in many of the older descriptive accounts of elections has led a number of political scientists to work with the so-called 'competitive theory of democracy'. Joseph Schumpeter, one of the leading exponents of this theory, has defined the 'democratic method' as 'that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote'.²⁷ Voting, which provides the electors with the opportunity to change their leaders, and competition between candidates for office, are here the key institutional devices of democracy. If 'democracy' is taken to be a political system defined institutionally in this way, empirical analysis then concentrates on the conditions for its successful operation, while the chief problem of policy becomes that of ensuring that these conditions in fact exist. The main requirement seems to be effective competition between leaders: this, in Plamenatz's view, ensures that the electorate is not 'manipulated' by the active ruling élite. (This view that freedom is guaranteed by free competition between *élites* derives ultimately from Mosca.) When there is no effective competition, the system ceases to be one in which the leaders are responsive to the independent wishes of non-leaders. Thus Dahl, for example, sees the main problem of democracy as that of regulating the 'great political oligopolies'—which is much as it seemed to the early utilitarians.

This 'competitive model' is adopted with variations by the writers with whom we are concerned. It is a general model useful as a point of departure in the description of existing democracies. The general picture is one of energetic and competing minorities at the top and a relatively apathetic majority, whose role is essentially that of exercising a very generalized control during the election, which is seen as a process of selecting and rejecting candidates in competition for public office. It should be seen clearly that such a model is not necessarily inconsistent with most traditional theories of democracy (except Rousseau's), for it clearly recognizes that an election in a large society can only produce

²⁷ Schumpeter, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

clear-cut and satisfactory results in this sort of way. As Schumpeter writes,

even if the opinions and desires of individual citizens were perfectly definite and independent data for the democratic process to work with, and even if everyone acted on them with rationality and promptitude, it would not necessarily follow that the political decisions produced by that process from the raw material of those individual volitions would represent anything that could in any convincing sense be called the will of the people.²⁸

The competitive model need not be incompatible with traditional notions of democracy, and it is just because classical democracy was not defined institutionally as a 'system of decision-making' that this is so. For, as we have seen, democracy in the traditional sense involves a great deal more than the correspondence of individual wills and collective decisions; it involves, for example, political equality, active consent about the form of government and the 'rules of the game', widespread discussion and participation, political and otherwise, through all kinds of activities and channels. To take a particular and relevant example, a study by Janowitz and Marvick,²⁹ which explicitly uses this competitive model, attempts to distinguish between a process of genuine consent and manipulation. The authors emphasize the importance of the quality of the voting decision, pointing out that high turnout does not necessarily reflect the process of consent. They write, in words of which John Stuart Mill would have approved:

The underlying belief in a democracy that everyone ought to vote is indeed such a deep-seated belief that it must be regarded as a utopian goal. Reforms have been suggested above that are designed to enhance the quality of the vote by modification of the social structure. Yet in terms of practical political reform, the crucial problem is to improve the quality of competing political leaders and to increase voter competence.³⁰

The theorists of the new democracy, however, are less concerned to make the competitive 'democratic system' more democratic in the traditional sense than to justify it as an efficient and stable system, depending on compromise, 'pluralism', and a general background of apathy and

²⁸ Schumpeter, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

²⁹ 'Competitive Pressure and Democratic Consent' in Eulau *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-85, which is based on a larger study with the same title (Institute of Public Administration, Michigan, 1956).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

political incompetence. In fact, their theory, which is intended to explain the 'democratic system', becomes in the end the new normative theory of democracy. We are driven to this conclusion by the form of their arguments. The question arises: What implications have election studies for democratic theory? The conclusion is that that theory must be made more 'realistic'. The confrontation of classical democratic ideals with actual 'democratic systems' ('what we call democracy') has no other result than the acceptance of the actual systems and their assumed conditions as entirely desirable. Electoral apathy, incompetence, and so on, which exist in most stable 'modern democracies' are now considered to be conditions of their successful functioning and are therefore taken to be the new democratic norms.

There are, of course, differences between the writers under consideration. The sociologists, e.g. Dahl and Parsons, are more concerned to produce a scientific theory of the system, whereas others, e.g. Plamenatz and Schumpeter, are much less ambitious, which is not to say that their caution is misplaced. The system is justified on a number of different grounds, and doubtless there are a number of important internal disagreements between these different writers. We can only examine a number of the most common arguments and assumptions, which may not be shared in detail by all of them.

The most notable feature of this recent democratic theory is the shift in emphasis from the needs and potentialities of the individual citizen to the requirements of the system. Despite inadequacies in individuals, the system works. In Berelson's vague words, 'The *system of democracy* does meet certain requirements of a going political organization. The individuals may not meet all the standards, but the whole nevertheless survives and grows. This suggests that where the classical theory is defective is in its concentration on the *individual citizen*.'³¹ And again, in more exalted vein, 'Where the rational citizen seems to abdicate, nevertheless angels seem to tread'.³²

It may be useful to look in some detail at Berelson's own account of the democratic system. He sees it pre-eminently as a system in equilibrium and he is followed in this by Talcott Parsons in an essay entitled '*Voting and the Equilibrium of the American Political System*'. (Parsons in fact attempts to integrate Berelson's picture into his own 'general theory of social systems'.) Berelson describes the system mainly in terms of 'balances' and the distribution of qualities in various dimen-

³¹ Berelson (1), *op. cit.*, p. 312. ³² *Ibid.*, p. 311.

sions. For political democracy to survive, the elements of the system must be distributed and related in a certain way. 'What seems to be required of the electorate as a whole is a distribution of qualities along important dimensions. We need some people who are active in a certain respect, others in the middle and still others passive.'³³ And, 'happily for the system', the voters are distributed along a smooth continuum. There must be a 'balance' between 'involvement and indifference', 'stability and flexibility', 'progress and conservatism', 'consensus and cleavage' and, finally, 'individualism and collectivism'. Low interest provides 'maneuvering room' ('only the doctrinaire would deprecate the moderate indifference that facilitates compromise') and heterogeneity produces a balance between strongly and weakly motivated actions. Also, apart from the many factors making for social stability, 'voters carry over to each new election remnants of issues raised in previous elections—and so there is always an overlapping of old and new decisions that gives a cohesion in time to the political system'.³⁴ On the other hand, the least partisan are also functional to the system, making for 'flexibility'—'for those who change political preferences most readily are those who are least interested, who are subject to conflicting social pressures, who have inconsistent beliefs and erratic voting histories. Without them . . . the system might prove too rigid to adapt to changing domestic and international conditions'.³⁴ There is, says Berelson, 'stability on both sides and flexibility in the middle' and once again 'an individual "inadequacy" provides a positive service for the society'. Finally, there is the essential requirement of 'pluralism', which 'makes for enough consensus to hold the system together and enough cleavage to make it move'. This social heterogeneity produces a 'cross-cutting and harmonious community interest' with a 'balance between total political war between segments of the society and total political indifference to group interests of that society'.³⁵

There are a number of important objections to Berelson's account. To begin with, the description of the conditions claimed to be necessary and functional to the system all embody the basic assumption of a system in equilibrium. The use, explicit or otherwise, of equilibrium concepts in the social sciences is often open to serious methodological criticisms³⁶ and leaves its practitioners subject to the suspicion of

³³ Berelson (1), *op. cit.*, p. 314. ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 316. ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

³⁶ See in this connexion an interesting paper by David Easton called 'Limits of the Equilibrium Model in Social Research', *Chicago Behavioral Sciences Publications*, no. 1 (1953), reprinted in Eulau *et al.*, *op. cit.*

having based conservatism upon a pseudo-scientific foundation. More specifically, the application of an equilibrium model to actual social situations does require either careful quantification of the relevant variables (ordinally or cardinally) or else a situation where an equilibrium situation is directly visible (although, of course, the use of such a model may always lead to fruitful questions). Otherwise little specific sense can be made of the idea of 'balance' between elements. Yet Berelson speaks quite glibly of the balance between his various 'qualities', where neither of these conditions is fulfilled. Parsons, following Berelson, seems to accept these 'balances', translating them into his own terms as 'functional requirements'. He writes that, within a broad framework, 'if the political system is, in the relation between leadership and support, to be a relatively stable one that can integrate multifarious pluralistic interests and yet adapt to changing conditions, it must, *within broadly specifiable limits*, have certain characteristics'.³⁷ What we dispute is that any precise characterization has been given of these 'broadly specifiable limits' (by Berelson or by Parsons) such that we must accept their account of an equilibrium system with 'checks and balances' and the capacity for self-adjustment afforded by heterogeneity and apathy within the electorate. There is, in other words, no reason to agree that the 'democratic system' is in smoothly functioning equilibrium; and if we look hard at the assumptions behind this theory, we tend to be left with vague and questionable assertions about social harmony.

In the second place, the supposed requirements of the system are presented in an obviously value-laden and tendentious way. Berelson claims, in a rather obscure passage, that 'it turns out that this distribution itself, with its internal checks and balances, can perform the functions and incorporate the same values ascribed by some theorists to each individual in the systems, as well as to the constitutive political institutions!'³⁸ Berelson here seems to be trying to have the best of both worlds. Not only is his theory of democracy realistic, describing actual societies, but the old individual values are somehow incorporated in it. Apart from the verbal peculiarity (how can a distribution of qualities incorporate the values ascribed to individuals?) the claim seems hardly to have been sustained in any detail. Both he and Parsons try to show

³⁷ Parsons, *op. cit.*, p. 114 (our emphasis). For general criticism of Parsons' functional theories see Dahrendorf, 'Out to Utopia', *American Journal of Sociology* (1958), pp. 115-27.

³⁸ Berelson (1), *op. cit.*, p. 323.

that the *system* is rational—that is, its parts are co-ordinated and it develops smoothly—but this is not rationality in any of the senses normally ascribed to individuals. Some people are active, interested and competent; others are not. Does the distribution itself, rather than any individual, incorporate these values? If this is what Berelson means, it is a roundabout and deceptive way of putting the view that, though Americans as a whole are not ideal democratic citizens, a few people do possess the required qualities and, moreover, the political system does not disintegrate.

Thirdly, the system's supposed requirements are stated very loosely—often too loosely for the validity of the account to be assessed—and sometimes tautologously, with little descriptive content. What, for example, does the requirement that there should be a 'nice balance' between consensus and cleavage, reflecting the 'health of a democratic order', really amount to? It is true but uninformative to say that if there is *too much* cleavage a democratic system—or any other system—will disintegrate: one can scarcely disagree with Berelson when he writes, 'Political parties in a democracy should disagree—but not too much, too sharply, nor too fundamentally'. Yet how can one measure these qualities to find out whether they are in balance (and what is so sacrosanct about this notional equilibrium point in any case)? This is not to say that the ideas of consensus and conflict are analytically useless; it is simply that here they are being misused, for, given that there is a measure of basic or 'higher-order' consensus, there is room for wide dispute over the nature and degree of cleavage that is tolerable or desirable (and, as Lipset shows, cleavage may itself be a factor making for consensus). And it does not help to speak of 'pluralism' as a 'kind of glue' which holds the system together when threatened by cleavage. Does this mean anything precise? What, for instance, is one to make of the following obscure passage from Berelson: 'The multiplicity and the heterogeneity of identifications and associations in the great society develop an overlapping, pluralistic social organization which both sharpens and softens the impact and the consequences of political activity'?²⁹

Finally, there is no warrant for saying that the features isolated are requirements of the system—unless, of course, they are included definitionally as parts of it. The clearest and most important instance is that of apathy. Apathy serves, says Berelson, as a "cushion" to absorb the

²⁹ Berelson (2), *op. cit.*, p. 114.



intense action of highly motivated partisans' (Apathy) it is claimed, helps the democratic system to function smoothly by facilitating change and reducing the impact of fanaticism, thus guarding against the danger of total politics'. Also, in Parsons's words, there is the 'indifference reaction', among the apathetic and incompetent floaters, which is the 'element of flexibility necessary to allow sufficient shift of votes to permit a two-party system to function effectively without introducing unduly disruptive elements into the system'.⁴⁰ Yet what is the basis for this claim that apathy must exist to hold the system together and give it flexibility, while cushioning the shock of disagreement and change? The theoretical framework seems hardly adequate to allow the role of apathy as an element of the system to be described in this way. That is to say, arguments about the necessity of apathy may always be confronted with the suggestion that any given society with democratic institutions or a democratic temper can in certain conditions tolerate an appreciably higher degree of participation than these theorists allow. The evidence, such as it is, does not in any way prove or even confirm the theory of the necessity of apathy to the survival of democracy.

Yet many of the writers under discussion support this theory, either on the basis of the equilibrium model criticized above or more generally on the basis of the evidence of scattered historical cases of differing degrees of participation. For example, Tingsten⁴¹ makes the point, on the basis of interwar election figures in Austria and Germany, that 'an exceptionally high voting frequency may indicate an intensification of political controversy which may involve a danger to the democratic system'. His conclusion is that high political participation *may* not be a sign of the health of a democracy, but he also points out that it is misleading to speak of participation as though it were one thing whatever the community or circumstances: in other countries 'a high degree of participation cannot be judged in the same manner'.⁴² Moreover, in the cases mentioned, high participation seems less a cause than a consequence of deeper-rooted social conflicts—high participation may mark some periods of crisis but it does not explain their origins. All that the evidence shows is that a high degree of electoral participation has sometimes been a symptom of crises in democracy and not even, as Lipset says, misinterpreting Tingsten's point, that 'political apathy may reflect

⁴⁰ Parsons, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

⁴¹ Herbert Tingsten, *Political Behaviour* (P. S. King & Son, London, 1937).

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 226.

pseudo/symptomatic (misinterpretation)

the health of a democracy.⁴⁸ The historical examples need careful handling—one might well argue, for instance, that the Weimar Republic fell chiefly because of apathy about the régime. In any case, neither apathy nor participation can profitably be considered in abstraction from historical contexts: apathy in the Weimar Republic can scarcely be identified with that of the affluent society of contemporary America, while increased participation, if it means a sudden 'intrusion of the masses into politics' in an artificial way is hardly equivalent to the classical prescriptions for heightened general participation in the political and other activities in the life of the community. In brief, it has nowhere been shown that apathy is either necessary or functional to democracy.

To sum up, our conclusion is that no adequate empirical theory, still less a 'scientific' theory, of institutional 'democracy' has been provided. Apart from incidental insights, the notion of a stable equilibrium system is misleading as an account of 'what we call democracy' and is deceptively presented as a development of traditional theories of democracy. Furthermore, the 'requirements' of the 'democratic system'—in particular, apathy—have certainly not been proved to be necessary to the survival of a democratic society.

III

It is evident that the theorists of the new democracy share a number of contemporary preoccupations which have blinded them both to the possible development and to the possible diversity of democratic societies and have led them to describe apathy as a central requirement of the functioning of such societies. Essentially, these preoccupations centre on a basic distinction between totalitarianism and liberal democracy, which underlies a great deal of recent sociological and political writing. This dichotomy, historically explicable though it is, has, in our view, distorted much recent thinking about politics among Western intellectuals. It has led to an exaggerated fear of 'ideology' and the celebration of its supposed end in the modern affluent western society, and, in addi-

⁴⁸ Lipset, *op. cit.*, p. 32, n. 20. Lipset claims on the same page that 'the belief that a very high level of participation is always good for democracy is not valid.' This statement is true but misleading. In supporting participation the classical democrats were thinking mainly in terms of a stable, liberal society, in which people accepted the good faith of their opponents and were prepared to work within the system.

tion, the familiar 'argument from the concentration camp' has often been used to condemn traditionally democratic and radical ideas which really have no necessary connexion with totalitarianism. In general, this argument takes the form of isolating a particular idea or policy from its context, either theoretical or historical, and then indicating its putative affinity with totalitarian ideas and practices. One may well question not only the specific interpretations, but also the belief that political ideas can, in any case, be more or less clearly divided into the liberal-democratic and totalitarian categories. In times of great uncertainty conservatism has a natural appeal and the advantages of stable societies are apt to be greatly exaggerated. The political system is seen as an exquisitely fragile mechanism and all possible dangers to its stability are jealously guarded against. Hence the general contemporary concern with the conditions of a stable, non-totalitarian political system and the resulting desire to avoid anything which might lead to a dangerous involvement of the masses in politics. Such a development, it is claimed, would threaten both the smooth functioning of the system and the freedom and privacy of the individual.

This background helps to explain the new directions of democratic theory. The early democratic theorists, hating the tyranny of the old régime of monarchs and aristocrats, stressed the role of vigilance and participation in protecting hard-won rights against predatory 'sinister interests'. Political participation especially was to safeguard society, protect individuals and groups and develop individual qualities as well as men's control over their social lives. The theorists of the new democracy tend to see widespread participation, interest, and conflict as substantial dangers to democracy and like to refer to the fraudulent claims of those totalitarians who see themselves as the real practitioners of democracy and the true representatives of the people. There are thus these twin dangers of 'total politics', which may disrupt the system, and totalitarian politics, which may eliminate freedom and privacy. This explains their eagerness to define the new political role of democratic man very narrowly. Meanwhile all the more radical features of the democratic tradition are abandoned in favour of a timid conservatism.

A characteristic piece of writing in this connexion is W. H. Morris-Jones's article, 'In Defence of Apathy',⁴⁴ which is often referred to in the literature and has had some measure of influence. The explicit purpose of this article is 'to suggest that many of the ideas connected

⁴⁴ *Political Studies*, vol. ii, 1954, pp. 25-37.

with the general theme of a duty to vote belong properly to the totalitarian camp and are out of place in the vocabulary of liberal democracy'.⁴⁶ But the discussion proceeds less by detailed argument than by a process of contamination: from ideas which are part of the liberal-democratic tradition the slide is made to allegedly connected notions which are clearly totalitarian. 'Political interestedness', says Morris-Jones, is the 'mark of the elect' and the obligation to vote is a dangerous idea, for 'it needs no demonstration that a totalitarian view of life easily involves an obligation not only to vote, but to do much more—and to do it, moreover, in the right direction'.⁴⁶ The trick is transparent. There is really no connexion between the obligation to vote and the obligation to act in the right direction; any idea can be simply contaminated in this way by detaching it from the theory within which it was advanced and then showing that some people have held it alongside genuinely nasty views. Apart from this, Morris-Jones advances the positive argument that parliamentary democracy should be seen less as a 'system of government resting primarily on participation and consent' but rather as 'a manner of dealing with business, a way of going about things'. In this case, the presence of the apathetic is a 'sign of understanding and tolerance of human variety' and has a 'beneficial effect on the tone of political life . . . (being) . . . a more or less effective counterforce to those fanatics who constitute the real danger to political democracy'.⁴⁷ The implication is obvious: to advocate widespread and general political participation is to advocate the development of intolerance and doctrinaire fanaticism.

This inference is frequently drawn in contemporary political theory and it is usually carried further, to the totalitarian conclusion that men are to be made purely political, privacy and liberty is to be invaded, and all the good things of civilized life destroyed. Examples of this kind of argument are to be found in Morris-Jones's article, in Hogan's book on Election and Representation,⁴⁸ in Talmon's critique of Rousseau⁴⁹ and in Berlin's Two Concepts of Liberty.⁵⁰ On the one hand, the connexion is claimed to be established between the desire to participate and the totalitarian result. Berlin, for example, writes:

⁴⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 25. ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴⁹ J. Hogan, *Election and Representation* (Cork University Press and Blackwell, Oxford, 1945).

⁵⁰ J. L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (Mercury Books, 1961). See especially pp. 46–47.

⁵¹ Sir I. Berlin, *Two Concepts of Liberty* (Oxford University Press, 1958).

The desire to be governed by myself, or at any rate to participate in the process by which my life is to be controlled, may be as deep a wish as that for a free area for action, and perhaps historically older. But it is not a desire for the same thing. So different is it, indeed, as to have led in the end to the great clash of ideologies that dominates our world.⁵¹

On the other hand, apathy is held to be valuable because it shows the 'limitations of politics', that men are more than political creatures and can if they wish ignore politics entirely. In Hogan's words, 'Viewed in this light, the apathy and caprice for which political democracy has been blamed is seen to be rather to its credit than otherwise. It means at any rate that people are free to interest themselves or to disinterest themselves as they please in political affairs.' This argument in terms of an ideal of freedom is deeply misleading. What is in question is not the right of men to be apathetic (and thus the enforcement of a duty to vote) but whether a society in which men concern themselves with political matters, as well as with many other matters, is likely to be more desirable than one marked by widespread apathy. If the vast majority of men were quite uninterested in politics and full general participation were demanded of everybody immediately, it is perhaps natural to infer that only constant coercion could achieve the desired result—and even more so if the desired result were unanimity. But it should hardly need saying that the ideal of general political participation is quite compatible with liberal safeguards and the rejection of coercion for partisan political goals, for instance, 'voting in the right direction'. It may be urged, with no totalitarian overtones whatsoever, that men ought to play some part in politics for their own good and for the good of society. The old democratic ideal sees apathy as dangerous because men cannot rely on others to protect their own interests and because the holders of power are likely to exercise it with too little concern for the general body of the people and for minority interests. It also considers politics to be a proper concern of the citizen and one of the fields of human excellence. In doing this, the classical theorists were very far indeed from urging constant and active participation at the behest of totalitarian masters; Stalinist Russia is as far removed from their ideals as it is from those of modern anti-totalitarians.

Mill

As for coercion, this was the very thing that the classical theorists

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16. Berlin, however, does not support the view that apathy preserves democracy and liberty. His position is that positive liberty can lead to totalitarian consequences when the meaning of the word 'self' is extended.

⁵² Hogan, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

of democracy were concerned at all costs to avoid. The new theorists may argue that the old ideals must lead to this result, but we see no compelling reason to believe them. The new familiar dichotomies between totalitarianism and liberal democracy, between positive and negative liberty, between 'utopianism' and piecemeal pragmatism, have achieved something like a stranglehold over political theorizing. No middle way is conceded between the concentration camp and a cautious conservatism. Talmon remarks characteristically of the 'early totalitarians' that they refused 'to take the people as it was for granted; the people, that is to say the sum total of the given generation, the good and the bad, the advanced and the backward, with their wishes, enlightened or otherwise'.⁵³ The implicit bias of this kind of view is obvious: we must accept the existing situation in its entirety, so that the only political issue left is that of making the 'system' work more efficiently. Yet the refusal simply to accept the existing situation by no means implies the acceptance of coercion and minority domination, shaping the fabric of an existing society in the image of a utopia.

The voices of sanity and reason sound above all in times of crisis and rapid change, and their conservative tone is familiar. Edmund Burke similarly appealed to the proved virtues of stable societies against the widespread criticism of established institutions at the time of the French Revolution. The arguments of the writers we have discussed bear witness to a worthy concern with avoiding the real dangers of totalitarian politics, dangers which no one should minimize; but they have gone too far in the opposite direction. Preoccupied with stability and protecting the system against too much participation, they have in reality abandoned, without realizing it, a whole tradition of political thinking—a tradition which they claim to be developing and revising. Their arguments are, in any case, too loose to convince and too complacent to excite. This is not to say that the older democratic theories are not in need of any revision. But they have survived these particular attacks and retain their central interest and value. In particular, general political participation has not been destroyed as a desirable goal for democratic societies, nor are the new ideals that have been offered to us imposed upon us by the facts of contemporary political life.

⁵³ Talmon, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

Lane Davis

The Cost of Realism: Contemporary Restatements of Democracy

During the last thirty years, there have been a number of efforts to restate democratic political theory in terms which would be more satisfactory to the needs of the present day. This reconsideration of the theory of democracy extends to writers of many diverse points of view responding, as one might expect, to the challenges raised by alternatives to political democracy and to problems internal to democratic societies.

The weaknesses which these restatements seek to remedy are various and resistant to any neat summary. They range from the philosophical foundations of democratic values through conventional notions about conditions conducive to the success of a democratic polity or particular democratic institutions. From this broad range of possibilities, this essay will consider those recent statements which exhibit a particular concern for the descriptive accuracy of democratic political theory.¹

¹ The classic expression of this point of view is found in Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (2nd ed.; New York and London: Harper, 1942), Part IV: it is still the clearest and best. For recent and explicitly theoretical statements see, among others, ~~Bernard Berelson et al.~~, *Voting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), chap. 14; Samuel H. Beer, "New Structures of Democracy: Britain and America," and Louis Hartz, "Democracy: Image and Reality," in W. N. Chambers and R. H. Salisbury (eds.), *Democracy in Mid-20th Century* (St. Louis: Washington University Press, 1960); Walter Lippmann, *The Public Philosophy* (New York: New American Library, 1956); S. M. Lipset, SOURCE: *The Western Political Quarterly*, XVII, 1 (March, 1964), 37-46. Reprinted with permission of the University of Utah, copyright owners.

Lane Davis is professor of political science at the University of Iowa.

These contemporary writers seek to delineate the descriptive weaknesses of existing democratic political theory and to present an amended theory of political democracy more in line with contemporary knowledge of empirical political reality. It is the argument of this essay that the effort to make democratic theory more realistic has brought many other changes with it; that the effect of these restatements goes considerably further than just improved descriptive realism. The values and expectations which justified political democracy have been changed. The rationale for popular political activity which is at the very center of much democratic theory has been rejected. In short, the cost of realism has been the practical abandonment of what has been the distinctive moral function of democratic politics and government.

I

The object of criticism and restatement by this group of contemporary democrats is the so-called "classical" theory of political democracy which prescribes popular rule after the model of the New England town meeting or the seventeenth-century nonconformist church congregation. This theory posits the existence of rational and active citizens who seek to realize a generally recognized common good through the collective initiation, discussion, and decision of policy questions concerning public affairs, and who delegate authority to agents (elected government officials) to carry through the broad decisions reached by the people through majority vote.²

Political Man (Garden City: Doubleday, 1960); Henry Mayo, *An Introduction to Democratic Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960). Mayo is particularly useful as a relatively complete statement of this position. This point of view informs many recent studies of American politics. See James Q. Wilson, *The Amateur Democrat* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), for a persuasive defense of this position and an excellent brief account (pp. 341ff.) of how it finds expression in the literature of American political parties. In the discussion which follows, I will use the relatively neutral label of *contemporary* to refer to this particular conception of democracy and those who espouse it.

²Classical political democracy refers to the mainstream of the democratic intellectual tradition which includes such diverse figures as the seventeenth-century Levellers, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, and the Jacksonian democrats. Among its many twentieth-century spokesmen may be mentioned Ernest Barker, John Dewey, A. D. Lindsay and Roland Pennock. Two recent statements which agree on classical democracy, though perhaps little else, are Joseph Tussman, *Obligation and the Body Politic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), and Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).

The indictment brought against this version of political democracy is a sweeping one. The theory has been asserted to be logically unsatisfactory. It fails to provide clear definitions of such terms as "rule" and "people" which are obviously central to a conception of government by rule of the people. It posits a substantive common good as "the beacon light of policy" but fails to develop a consistent explanation of the nature of such a common good or how men may come to recognize it.³ It lacks a satisfactory treatment of the problems raised by the simultaneous affirmation of majority rule and minority rights.⁴ Finally, the theory defines democracy in ideal terms rather than by reference to existing political reality. The effect of this "is to rob the theory of all operational and empirical content," destroy its utility for description or explanation, and make communication about it "virtually impossible."⁵

The departures of classical theory from reality also have been pointed out in detail. Classical democracy, it is asserted, rests on untenable or radically incomplete conceptions of man and politics. Democratic man is neither as rational, as disinterested, as informed, nor as active in public affairs as he is assumed to be. The roles of organized groups, leadership, and emotion in political affairs are either ignored, underplayed, or simply condemned. The highly technical and complex process of policy-making is oversimplified and misunderstood.⁶

Sloughing off these asserted errors of logic and fact, contemporary democratic theorists propose a conception of political democracy based on a realistic description of the political systems through which existing states have sought to realize popular rule.⁷ The heart of this contem-

³The phrase and the argument belong to Schumpeter. See Schumpeter, *op. cit.*, pp. 250 ff.

⁴An excellent discussion of these problems is found in R. A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956). See also H. S. Commager, *Majority Rule and Minority Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1943); Willmore Kendall, *John Locke and the Doctrine of Majority Rule* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1941); and Willmore Kendall and Austin Ranney, *Democracy and the American Party System* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1956), Part I, for further discussions.

⁵Mayo, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁶This paragraph is a summary of criticisms found in the contemporary democrats mentioned above. In particular: on the political nature of man see Berelson, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-11; on the role of leadership, Schumpeter, *op. cit.*, p. 270; on the roles of emotion and organized groups, Hartz, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-25; on the misunderstanding of the policy-making process, Lippmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-50.

⁷"We have made the Enlightenment work in spite of itself, and surely it is

porary restatement was summed up by Joseph Schumpeter. "The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."⁸

The essential role of the public in democratic political rule is thus defined as the choice of key governmental policy-makers. Popular control of government is limited to after-the-fact decisions on this question alone. The function of the electorate is to legitimate governmental authority. It is not to initiate or decide issues of public policy.⁹

Such a conception of political democracy sharply reduces the extent and the intensity of necessary individual participation in democratic politics. This permits the abandonment of the classical notion that general attainment of the ideal of rational, active, and informed democratic man is essential to the realization of genuine political democracy. Political democracy is now considered to be a complex system within which apathy and ignorance as well as activity and informed reason have a part to play.¹⁰ Thus, the reality of irrational mass emotion, self-interest, group egoism, and the prevalence of oligarchic and hierarchical social and economic organizations need no longer be denied in the name of democratic values. The way is cleared for recognition of, and scientific inquiry into, the workings of democratic political systems as they actually exist.

II

In considering the indictment brought against classical democratic theory, the charge that it fails as a descriptive and explanatory tool can only be met by a plea of *nolo contendere*. The theory was not created to describe any existing democratic polity of any considerable size employing representative institutions. It grew from many sources as an essay in prescription. As such, it contains a prescription for a worthwhile polity

time we ceased to be frightened of the mechanisms we have devised to do so. We have implemented popular government, democratic judgment and the equal state on a scale that is remarkable by any earthly standard." Hartz, *op. cit.*, p. 29. See also Mayo, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-61.

⁸ Schumpeter, *op. cit.*, p. 269. ⁹ Mayo, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-87.

¹⁰ "What seems to be required of the electorate as a whole is a distribution of qualities along important dimensions. We need some people who are active in a certain respect, others in the middle, and still others passive." Berelson, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

which should be sought after. Perhaps the American Progressives, so far as they were concerned with increasing the amount of direct popular participation in policy-making, represent the clearest example in recent American experience of an organized movement which took this goal seriously. The Progressives, however, have not been alone in their aspirations. For many others, classical democracy has been—and still is—used as a point of departure for criticism of existing politics and society.

The classical theory represents an effort, however inadequate it might be, to construct a practical political theory for democracy. Not practical in the sense of containing a realistic description of existing society, but practical in the sense of providing guide lines for those who seek to transcend existing political reality for something better: a polity which would realize among its citizens generally “the ‘dignity’ which is found in sharing the collegial life of the rulers of the human city.”¹¹

The immediate objective of classical democracy has always been to extend the opportunity for individuals to take an equal and an effective part in the management of public affairs. Through this opportunity, it was believed, the horizons of the participating individual would be widened, his knowledge extended, his sympathies made less parochial, his practical intelligence developed. Participation in the management of public affairs would serve as a vital means of intellectual, emotional, and moral education leading toward the full development of the capacities of individual human beings. Participation in politics would provide men with opportunities to take part in making significant decisions and to transcend the narrow bounds of their private affairs. It would build and consolidate a sense of genuine community that would serve as a solid foundation for government. It would provide a strenuous and rewarding field of endeavor by extending opportunities for free activity and self-government beyond the frequently petty sphere of private life into the realm of the public domain which had hitherto been largely beyond the control, or the hope of control, of ordinary men.

This opportunity for education in public responsibility is the peculiar and distinguishing contribution which classical democracy makes to the ideal of human dignity and development. Of course it is possible for a democratic regime to do more than provide the opportunity for participation in government. The mere provision of peace and order, which is scarcely a unique contribution of democratic government, is necessary for the development of human personality. And the

¹¹ Tussman, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

protection of certain individual rights, the provision of various services, are also important. There are good reasons for thinking that democratic government may perform these essential functions more fully and more reliably than other kinds of government. This provides additional grounds for preferring it. But the heart of the matter is the value which is attached to individual participation in making decisions about public affairs.

To speak precisely, it is not the substantive choices which are made in various policy decisions which are crucial for *this* justification of democracy—though they are important—but the *human* results which accrue to those who take part in this method of managing public affairs.¹² In shorthand fashion, one may speak of the method of political democracy as valuable in itself regardless of results which it produces. In this way, one avoids the confusion of distinguishing between different sorts of results of the process; that is, between what might be called “policy results”—for example, the stringent regulation of private business or the legal prohibition of certain forms of racial segregation—and other results, “human results”—the growing practical capacities of those who take part in the process. So long as one keeps in mind that speaking of the method as an end in itself—at least in the context of classical democracy—is only a convenient elliptical expression, no confusion results.

It follows from what has been said that classical democratic theory is informed by an exceedingly ambitious purpose: the education of an entire people to the point where their intellectual, emotional, and moral capacities have reached their full potential and they are joined, freely and actively, in a genuine community. Beyond this magnificent general purpose, classical democratic theory also embodies one great strategy for the pursuit of this goal: the use of political activity and government for the purposes of public education. Governance is to be a continued effort in mass education. The key to the realization of human potentialities and creation of genuine community becomes the pursuit of the common good through political activity.

This strategy need not involve any denigration of the realm of private activity. Private life—family, friends, work, and religion—are

¹² Ernest Barker, *Reflections on Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), pp. 35ff.

part of the necessary social foundation upon which the citizen builds his concern with, and his participation in, public affairs.¹³ Nevertheless, the conclusion cannot be avoided that, for the classical democrat, private life is not enough. The road to intellectual and moral growth must lead to participation in the practical problems of public affairs. Full moral development for most men is only to be attained by taking part in, and accepting some responsibility for, the realization of a common good. The ancient Greek ideal, trimmed to the dimensions of modern society with its recognized spheres of human activity, is with us still. Man will attain his natural state only through the practical responsibilities of political action.

When we press classical democracy beyond this point, the unfinished business of democratic theory becomes increasingly evident. This is not a matter of patching up utopian holes in the structure of classical theory. Rather it is the elaboration of plans of action and specific prescriptions which offer hope of progress toward a genuinely democratic polity; detailed prescriptions which bring the general strategy of classical democracy down to earth in the varied contexts of contemporary states of all kinds.

Such prescriptions cannot be constructed only of aspiration and imagination, yet both are vitally necessary. Empirical research in politics and a variety of related fields is also necessary to provide more satisfactory explanations of the gaps which exist between political reality and the polity to which the classical democrats aspire. Such research requires "realistic" conceptual schemes which will permit the identification of phenomena which are relevant to the purpose at hand. But in the context of classical democracy, another purpose lies behind the effort to describe and explain. Description and explanation are only a means to facilitate democratic strategy, not a criterion of judgment. Hopefully, research may lead to the determination of an increasing number of reasonably well-validated hypotheses concerning the way people behave in politics and political institutions work in contemporary societies. These hypotheses may suggest limits on what can be done and how it can be done most efficiently—given the goal which the democrat

¹³ "The development of man thus expresses itself not only in the State, but also in the social group which constitutes the substance of society." Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 22. See also Barker, *Principles of Social and Political Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), pp. 42-43 and 123-35.

seeks. Generalizations based on reliable knowledge of past and present reality are good bases for educated guessing about the future and may shorten the inevitable process of trial and error.¹⁴

By providing more accurate understanding of present political reality, explanatory theories furnish a basis from which the classical democrat can estimate where he stands in relation to the goal he seeks. They also provide a roster of various possibilities which he can exploit in order to move closer to his goal. The study of American politics and the models which grow out of this study have a good deal to say about the multiform ways in which influence is exercised on the formation of public policy. Presumably, some of these forms contain more possibilities for advancing the political capacities of individuals than others. Such information as this will further the task of those who would develop prescriptive democratic theory.¹⁵

By knowing where he stands in relation to his goal, by knowing what probably can be done in the near future and what probably cannot, the classical democrat is better prepared to amend and elaborate the prescriptions of classical democratic theory. Yet, if explanation is valuable, it is valuable as an aid to prescription. It is not a substitute for it. To assume that the task of democratic political theory is description and that an accurate account of what is provides us with a statement of what ought to be, is to take issue with a good deal more than merely the descriptive accuracy of classical democratic theory.¹⁶ Such an assump-

¹⁴ There is, however, a compelling practical consideration for much caution when making predictions about the limits of the possible. Unlike predictions about what may happen and what may work, predictions about what may not are likely to foreclose the continued persistent efforts which may eventually succeed in achieving the "impossible." One might even suggest that authoritative predictions of the highly unlikely will only receive a thoroughgoing test from the dedicated or the ignorant—or from those who are both. Those best qualified by training and knowledge are likely to be diverted into more "practical" lines of endeavor. Thus a prediction that some state of affairs such as greatly increased popular political activity is probably unattainable is likely to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

¹⁵ For an example of this, see Roland Pennock, "Democracy and Leadership," in Chambers and Salisbury, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-125.

¹⁶ In some cases, the task of democratic theory is simply descriptive accuracy. See Schumpeter, *op. cit.*, chap. xxii. In other cases, the second part of the assumption is quite explicit. For example: "We can then tentatively agree to call a democratic political system one which has characteristic principles of operation both descriptive and normative, and a complete theory of democracy will be one which lays bare and justifies the separate principles of both kinds, and the system as a whole." Mayo, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

tion rejects the elements of aspiration and imagination which make the grand strategy of classical democracy and the prescriptions which follow from it relevant to the affairs of everyday life.

III

It would be an exceedingly hard statement to say that those contemporary democrats who aspire to greater political realism have entirely rejected the value of individual human development. Yet it seems clear that contemporary democrats are more concerned with democracy as a functioning system of government than with its direct or indirect effects on the individual.¹⁷ As a consequence, they are inclined to stress characteristics of the system as a whole as the criteria for the evaluation of politics.¹⁸

So far as human development serves these writers as a justifying value, its relevance rests primarily on the proposition that the probable *policy* results of a democratic government will be more conducive to human development than the probable *policy* results which can be expected from other kinds of government. Democratic government is defined as that in which the governed choose key government officials in periodic free elections. Such a government, being ultimately answerable to the governed, may be more responsible to their needs and wishes. It can be expected to provide better protection for individual rights, more adequate social services, better control of would-be exploiters, a more just system of taxation, and greater freedom for individuals and groups to express their interests and desires concerning public policy.

Popular participation is reduced to the manageable task of periodic choices in elections. This kind of participation is, at best, a pale and rather pathetic version of the responsible and active participation which was the aspiration of classical democracy. It is hard to see this sort of thing, intermittent in time and marginal in importance for an overwhelming majority of the public, as the central means to educate the

¹⁷ Berelson, *op. cit.*, pp. 312-13, is most explicit on this point.

¹⁸ For example, these remarks of Samuel Beer: ". . . by what criteria shall we judge that a system governs well or ill. . . . If one word were to be chosen that suggests them, it would be *efficiency*. . . . (1) the capacity to produce policies that are coherent within each field and over the whole area of governing; and (2) the capacity to identify new problems and make such innovations as may be called for." Samuel H. Beer, "New Structures of Democracy: Britain and America," in Chambers and Salisbury, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-57.

intellectual, emotional, and moral capacities of the citizen. Such an argument provides a very feeble justification for the contemporary version of democratic government. If active and responsible participation in collective activity is necessary for individual human development, the contribution of contemporary democracy must be chiefly one of removing obstacles to free and responsible activity in *other* areas of human life *outside* of politics.

Such a position has certain advantages which may recommend it to the political theorist. It permits him, if he wishes, to justify existing democratic systems through an argument to their probable policy results. It relieves him of the obligation to chart the road beyond the present, and frees him to concern himself with the description of existing democratic politics or past political ideas. Modestly curbing his aspirations and imagination, the contemporary democrat can remind us that democratic government can only do so much. Political democracy—as he defines the term—prescribes no single highroad to the goods of human life. Politics is only a method for managing public affairs. The goal of full human development must be sought in many ways, and a democratic society provides for responsible activity in many non-political spheres of human life. Political activity can only be directly important for a few. For the rest, government can best serve as an expert and beneficent steward who clears away obstacles, manages the vital necessities, and submits his accounts—simplified to his master's level of understanding—for periodic review.

I V

In the face of such a position, exhibiting the virtues of realism and moderation and cast in the fashionable terms of pluralism, it is necessary to emphasize what has been changed. Contemporary democracy is much more (or much less) than simply a more realistic statement of classical democracy which “salvages much of what sponsors of the [classical] democratic method really mean by this term.”¹⁹

In the first place, although the purpose of both kinds of theory is to prescribe, their approach and emphasis is strikingly different. The heart of classical democracy is moral purpose. It prescribes this purpose, then a general strategy for its fulfillment, and finally various institutions through which this strategy may be carried into operation. Contemporary democracy, on the other hand, begins with institutions—that set

¹⁹ Schumpeter, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

of institutions which realistically describe the essential features of existing democratic political systems. It moves from institutions to values, taking as democratic those values which are inherent in, or can be accommodated to, the given political institutions.

The assumptions of fact and value which underlie the prescriptive contents of the two theories are quite distinct, and the differences between them fall into a familiar pattern. Contemporary democracy may be considered less a restatement of classical democracy than a twentieth-century manifestation of the sober, cautious, Whig pluralism which, though often expressing itself politically in aristocratic terms, has been accounted a part of the democratic tradition since the seventeenth century. As with the earlier Whigs, these men "tend to accept existing society as a datum, susceptible to minor modifications, but always within a frame of reference supplied by the status quo."²⁰ As with the earlier Whigs, these men are dubious of notions of common good and social harmony and inclined to see politics in terms of the conflict of private interests. As with the earlier Whigs, these men are respectful of the limits of human reason and well aware of the irrational elements in human behavior. For both, this leads toward reliance on the political talents of an active elite. For earlier Whig and contemporary democrat, the basis of knowledge is empirical reality. For both, a clear understanding of empirical reality is necessary for men to measure the natural limits of their power and to exploit effectively what freedom of action they do possess. A realistic understanding of present circumstances is a compelling necessity. Both seem less concerned with change than with reasonable stability; less concerned with progress than with the virtues of the present. By limiting the moral possibilities of political activity, contemporary democrats reflect something of earlier Whig suspicions of political power. Politics serves, it does not create. As political power facilitated the enjoyment of natural rights for Locke, so political power may facilitate the pursuit of human fulfillment outside of politics for contemporary democracy.

Contemporary democracy changes the means and the locus of the contribution of government to human development, although the ideal itself is not necessarily rejected. Politics may still play a part in the pursuit of the ideal, but it no longer has the paramount role which it had

²⁰ Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960), p. 298. On the general point discussed in this paragraph, see Wolin, chap. 9, and G. H. Sabine, "The Two Democratic Traditions," *Philosophical Review*, 61 (1952), pp. 451-74.

before. The most significant realms for responsible personal activity now lie beyond the limits of politics—in economics, education, religion, art, social life, and even recreation. Without denying traditional democratic hopes for moral progress and social regeneration, contemporary democratic theory carefully excludes them from the list of essential features which define democracy. It is, at the very most, noncommittal as to the possibilities which active political participation offer as a means to such ends. The best chance lies in the policy results of responsible popular government.

Although both theories of democracy prescribe a system of responsible popular government, the words have different meanings in the two theories. Popular government or popular rule means, in the case of classical democracy, the active participation of most adult citizens in the determination of public policies. In contemporary democracy, as its exponents have been at great pains to make clear, popular rule means only the popular choice at periodic elections of governors who make policy decisions. The extent of popular participation which is *essential* to political democracy is no more than that. Though popular participation may often go well beyond this minimum, this is, strictly speaking, a matter of indifference to the theory.²¹

It follows from this that although both theories prescribe responsible government, the conception of responsibility to which they give effect is not the same. The strategy of classical democracy requires the active and creative participation of the citizen in collective self-government and the pursuit of the common good. Popular responsibility arises from the role of the citizens as the active creators of public policy, from their engagement with public questions and their commitment to the search for a common good. Responsibility is conceived in active terms. The citizen is responsible because he is an active creator; the primary meaning of popular responsibility is that the citizens are responsible to themselves for what they have done. The responsibility of government is a secondary and derivative responsibility. Government is responsible to its citizens for the way in which it has carried out *their* directions.

In contemporary democracy, the active role of the citizen as a

²¹ "The popular influence upon policies, as distinct from control over policy-making, goes on all the time and may take many institutionalized and legitimate forms. The extent of such influence, however, cannot be reduced to any public test which can be incorporated at the present time into a general theory. The reason is that popular influence and consultation take such an infinity of forms—of which interest or pressure groups are perhaps the best known—that hardly any general principle can as yet be enunciated." Mayo, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

defining feature of democratic government is limited to the periodic choice of governors. Responsible government refers primarily to the accountability of a creative and active governing elite to those who have been the objects of its policies. The citizen has only a minimal involvement as a creative actor in what he judges. He must necessarily judge governors, their records and their promises, largely as a passive object of the actions of others. To the extent that this notion of responsibility is accepted and the citizens are considered primarily as objects rather than as creative actors, they must be considered as essentially irresponsible. They are to judge a world they never made, and thus to become a genteel counterpart of the mobs which sporadically unseated aristocratic governments in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. If a high degree of social solidarity and sense of community are necessary for the effective functioning of any sort of democratic government, it must come largely from some other source than the political activities of the citizen. Contemporary democracy is, in fact, a theory dependent on the prior existence of an established community, to the development of which it makes little, if any, contribution.²²

Given the uncompromising demands of its ideal and its strategy, classical democracy is almost necessarily radical in relation to any existing political system. At their best, the realities of democratic politics are but a poor copy of what they should be, and classical democracy assumes that this is an undesirable but *not* unalterable state of affairs. Recognition of the gap between ideal and present reality and the difficulties of doing anything about it may create anxiety and gloom on the part of some who cherish the ideal.²³ This may lead to an effort to reject politics or to paper over the gap with a mythical view of present political reality. To assuage anxiety and avoid its possible consequences, the contemporary democrat proposes to reduce the tension between ideal and reality by changing the ideal to correspond—or nearly correspond—to reality. For those who find anything more than minor

²² Schumpeter saw this clearly. In discussing conditions for the success of the democratic method—as he defined it—he said: “Every system can stand deviating practices to a certain extent. But even the necessary minimum of democratic self-control evidently requires a national character and national habits of a certain type which have not everywhere had the opportunity to evolve and which the democratic method cannot be relied upon to produce.” Schumpeter, *op. cit.*, p. 295. See also Tussman, *op. cit.*, p. 60. On the relation between community and active responsibility see W. E. Olson, “Responsibility: An Escape and an Approach,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 19 (March 1963), pp. 2–6.

²³ Hartz, *op. cit.*, pp. 13–29.

adjustments in the status quo unacceptable, this remedy makes sense. For others, I suggest, it is very doubtful.

It may be, of course, that even a fair approximation of the ideal of classical democracy really is unattainable. The failure of a substantial majority of men to participate consistently or intelligently in existing democratic politics may be rooted in the nature of things. Plato may already have said the last word. This is possible, but enough changes have taken place in the last century or so in the political behavior of men to make it seem rather unlikely.

Assuming that change is possible, classical democracy suggests that even in the most advanced and successful countries far-reaching innovations are desirable—not only in the political systems but also in the social, economic, and cultural milieux associated with them.²⁴ While this tension between ideal and reality may lead to political neurosis in some, it can provide others with practical guidance for both theoretical and practical activity that is not tied down by commitments to the status quo. Classical democracy calls into question the failures of politics, which are an integral part of contemporary political reality, and suggests that we direct our energies toward dealing with them. It suggests inquiries and actions which lead out from politics to other aspects of human life in search for explanations and remedies. From this point of view, the significant problems are determined by their relevance to the future pursuit of the democratic ideal, not by their convenience for compiling descriptive data as a preliminary to a general explanatory theory of politics or by reference to the needs of the existing powers that be.

The institutional ideal of contemporary democracy necessarily lacks the radical bite of classical theory. It is bound in time and space by its realistic description of political reality. In a world inundated by change and rebellion against the past, this is scarcely an advantage. Contemporary democracy is less a guide to future action than a codification of past accomplishments. By translating the descriptive principles of present democratic reality into prescriptive terms, it vindicates the main features of the status quo and provides a model for tidying up loose ends. Democracy becomes a system to be preserved, not an end to be sought. Those who wish a guide to the future must look elsewhere.

²⁴ See Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 306–16 for a statement of classical democracy that is an integral part of a thoroughgoing economic and social radicalism.

Jack L. Walker

A Critique of the Elitist Theory of Democracy

During the last thirty years, there have been numerous attempts to revise or reconstitute the "classical" theory of democracy: the familiar doctrine of popular rule, patterned after the New England town meeting, which asserts that public policy should result from extensive, informed discussion and debate.¹ By extending general participation in decision-making the classical theorists hoped to increase the citizen's awareness of his moral and social responsibilities, reduce the danger of tyranny, and improve the quality of government. Public officials, acting as agents of the public at large, would then carry out the broad policies decided upon by majority vote in popular assemblies.

Although it is seldom made clear just which of the classical democratic theorists is being referred to, contemporary criticism has focused primarily on the descriptive elements of the theory, on its basic conceptions of citizenship, representation and decision-making.² The

¹For discussions of the meaning of the classical theory of democracy see: George Sabine, "The Two Democratic Traditions," *The Philosophical Review*, 61 (1952), 451-474; and his *A History of Political Theory* (New York, 1958), especially chs. 31 and 32. Also see J. Roland Pennock, *Liberal Democracy: Its Merits and Prospects* (New York, 1950); and Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Boston, 1960), especially chs. 9 and 10.

²Criticism of the descriptive accuracy of the classical theory has been widespread in recent years. The best statement of the basic objections usually made is Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York, 1942),

SOURCE: *The American Political Science Review*, LX, 2 (June, 1966), 285-95. Reprinted with permission.

Jack L. Walker is assistant professor of political science at the University of Michigan.

[concept of an active, informed, democratic citizenry, the most distinctive feature of the traditional theory, is the principal object of attack. On empirical grounds it is argued that very few such people can be found in Western societies. Public policy is not the expression of the common good as conceived of by the citizenry after widespread discussion and compromise. This description of policy making is held to be dangerously naive because it overlooks the role of demagogic leadership, mass psychology, group coercion, and the influence of those who control concentrated economic power. In short, classical democratic theory is held to be unrealistic; first because it employs conceptions of the nature of man and the operation of society which are utopian, and second because it does not provide adequate, operational definitions of its key concepts.

Since contemporary scholars have found the classical theory of democracy inadequate, a "revisionist" movement has developed, much as it has among contemporary Marxists, seeking to reconstitute the theory and bring it into closer correspondence with the latest findings of empirical research. One major restatement, called the "elitist theory of democracy" by Seymour Martin Lipset,³ is now employed in many contemporary books and articles on American politics and political behavior and is fast becoming part of the conventional wisdom of political science.

The adequacy of the elitist theory of democracy, both as a set of political norms and as a guide to empirical research, is open to serious question. It has two major shortcomings: first, in their quest for realism, the revisionists have fundamentally changed the normative significance of democracy, rendering it a more conservative doctrine in the process; second, the general acceptance of the elitist theory by contemporary political scientists has led them to neglect almost completely some profoundly important developments in American society.

Part IV. See also Bernard Berelson *et al.*, *Voting* (Chicago, 1954), chapter 14; articles by Louis Hartz and Samuel Beer in W. N. Chambers and R. H. Salisbury (eds.), *Democracy in the Mid-20th Century* (St. Louis, 1960); Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (New York, 1960); Robert Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago, 1956), and *Who Governs?* (New Haven, 1961), especially pp. 223-325; V. O. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (New York, 1961), especially Part VI; Lester W. Milbrath, *Political Participation* (Chicago, 1965), especially Chapter VI; and for a general summary of the position: Henry Mayo, *An Introduction to Democratic Theory* (New York, 1960).

³ Introduction by Lipset to the Collier Books paperback edition of Robert Michels's *Political Parties* (New York, 1962), p. 33.

I. NORMATIVE IMPLICATIONS OF THE
ELITIST THEORY

At the heart of the elitist theory is a clear presumption of the average citizen's inadequacies. As a consequence, democratic systems must rely on the wisdom, loyalty and skill of their political leaders, not on the population at large. The political system is divided into two groups: the *elite*, or the "political entrepreneurs,"⁴ who possess ideological commitments and manipulative skills; and the *citizens at large*, the masses, or the "apolitical clay"⁵ of the system, a much larger class of passive, inert followers who have little knowledge of public affairs and even less interest. The factor that distinguishes democratic and authoritarian systems, according to this view, is the provision for limited, peaceful competition among members of the elite for the formal positions of leadership within the system. As Joseph Schumpeter summarized the theory: "the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."⁶

Democracy is thus conceived primarily in procedural terms; it is seen as a method of making decisions which insures efficiency in administration and policy making and yet requires some measure of responsiveness to popular opinion on the part of the ruling elites. The average citizen still has some measure of effective political power under this system, even though he does not initiate policy, because of his right to vote (if he chooses) in regularly scheduled elections. The political leaders, in an effort to gain support at the polls, will shape public policy to fit the citizens' desires. By anticipating public reaction the elite grants the citizenry a form of indirect access to public policy making, without the creation of any kind of formal institutions and even in the absence of any direct communication. "A few citizens who are non-voters, and who for some reason have no influential contact with voters, have no indirect influence. Most citizens, however, possess a moderate degree of indirect influence, for elected officials keep the real or imagined preferences of constituents constantly in mind in deciding what policies to adopt or reject."⁷ An ambiguity is created here because obviously leaders

⁴The phrase is Dahl's in *Who Governs?*, p. 227. ⁵*Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁶Schumpeter, *op. cit.*, p. 269. ⁷Dahl, *Who Governs?*, p. 164.

sometimes create opinions as well as respond to them, but since the leaders are constantly being challenged by rivals seeking to gain the allegiance of the masses it is assumed that the individual citizen will receive information from several conflicting sources, making it extremely difficult for any one group to "engineer consent" by manipulating public opinion. As Lipset puts it: "Representation is neither simply a means of political adjustment to social pressures nor an instrument of manipulation. It involves both functions, since the purpose of representation is to locate the combinations of relationships between parties and social bases which make possible the operation of efficient government."⁸

There has been extensive research and speculation about the prerequisites for a democratic system of this kind. There is general agreement that a well developed social pluralism and an extensive system of voluntary groups or associations is needed, along with a prevailing sense of psychological security, widespread education and limited disparities of wealth. There must be no arbitrary barriers to political participation, and "enough people must participate in the governmental process so that political leaders compete for the support of a large and more or less representative cross section of the population."⁹

Elitist theory departs markedly from the classical tradition at this point. Traditionally it was assumed that the most important prerequisite for a stable democracy was general agreement among the politically active (those who vote) on certain fundamental policies and basic values, and widespread acceptance of democratic procedures and restraints on political activity. Political leaders would not violate the basic consensus, or "democratic mold," if they wished to be successful in gaining their objectives, because once these fundamental restraints were broken the otherwise passive public would become aroused and would organize against the offending leaders. Elitist theorists argue instead that agreement on democratic values among the "intervening structure of elites," the very elements which had been seen earlier as potential threats to democracy, is the main bulwark against a breakdown in constitutionalism. Writing in 1959, David Truman discards his notion of "potential groups," a variation of the traditional doctrine of consensus,

⁸ Lipset, Introduction to Michels, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁹ Robert Dahl and Charles Lindblom, *Politics, Economics and Welfare* (New York, 1953), p. 309.

and calls instead for a "consensus of elites," a determination on the part of the leaders of political parties, labor unions, trade associations and other voluntary associations to defend the fundamental procedures of democracy in order to protect their own positions and the basic structure of society itself from the threat of an irresponsible demagogue.¹⁰ V. O. Key, in his *Public Opinion and the American Democracy*, concludes that "the critical element for the health of a democratic order consists in the beliefs, standards, and competence of those who constitute the influentials, the opinion-leaders, the political activists in the order."¹¹ Similarly, Robert Dahl concludes in his study of New Haven that the skillful, active political leaders in the system are the true democratic "legitimists."¹² Since democratic procedures regulate their conflicts and protect their privileged positions in the system the leaders can be counted on to defend the democratic creed even if a majority of the voters might prefer some other set of procedures.¹³

It has also been suggested by several elitist theorists that democ-

¹⁰ David Truman, "The American System in Crisis," *Political Science Quarterly* (December, 1959), pp. 481-497. See also a perceptive critique of Truman's change of attitude in Peter Bachrach, "Elite Consensus and Democracy," *The Journal of Politics*, 24 (1962), 439-452.

¹¹ Key, *op. cit.*, p. 558. See also Key's "Public Opinion and the Decay of Democracy," *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, 37 (1961), 481-494.

¹² Dahl's position on this issue seems to have undergone a transformation somewhat similar to Truman's. Compare Dahl and Lindblom, *op. cit.*, Chapter 11 with Dahl, *Who Governs?*, Books IV, V, VI.

¹³ Dahl, *Who Governs?*, pp. 311-325. It is important to note that these conclusions about the crucial function of an elite consensus in democracy were based on little empirical evidence. Truman, Key and Dahl seem to rely most heavily on Samuel Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties* (New York, 1955), a study based on national opinion surveys which was concerned with only one issue (McCarthyism) and did not investigate the relationship between the expressed opinions of its subjects and their behavior under stress; and James Prothro and Charles Grigg, "Fundamental Principles of Democracy: Bases of Agreement and Disagreement," *Journal of Politics*, 22 (1960), 276-294, a study of attitudes in two small cities. More recently, however, Herbert McClosky has produced more convincing data in his "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics," *The American Political Science Review*, 58 (1964), 361-382. On page 377 McClosky concludes that widespread agreement on procedural norms is not a prerequisite to the success of a democratic system: "Consensus may strengthen democratic viability, but its absence in an otherwise stable society need not be fatal, or even particularly damaging." McClosky's conclusions are called into question by data presented by Samuel Eldersveld, *Political Parties: A Behavioral Analysis* (Chicago, 1964), pp. 183-219; and Edmond Constantini, "Intraparty Attitude Conflict: Democratic Party Leadership in California," *Western Political Quarterly*, 16 (1963), 956-972.

racies have good reason to fear increased political participation. They argue that a successful (that is, stable) democratic system depends on widespread apathy and general political incompetence.¹⁴ The ideal of democratic participation is thus transformed into a "noble lie" designed chiefly to insure a sense of responsibility among political leaders. As Lester Milbrath puts it:

. . . it is important to continue moral admonishment for citizens to become active in politics, not because we want or expect great masses of them to become active, but rather because the admonishment helps keep the system open and sustains a belief in the right of all to participate, which is an important norm governing the behavior of political elites.¹⁵

—If the uninformed masses participate in large numbers, democratic self-restraint will break down and peaceful competition among the elites, the central element in the elitist theory, will become impossible.

The principal aim of the critics whose views we are examining has been to make the theory of democracy more realistic, to bring it into closer correspondence with empirical reality. They are convinced that the classical theory does not account for "much of the real machinery" ¹⁶ by which the system operates, and they have expressed concern about the possible spread among Americans of either unwarranted anxiety or cynical disillusionment over the condition of democracy. But it is difficult to transform a utopian theory into a realistic account of political behavior without changing the theory's normative foundations. By revising the theory to bring it into closer correspondence with reality, the elitist theorists have transformed democracy from a radical into a conservative political doctrine, stripping away its distinctive emphasis on popular political activity so that it no longer serves as a set of ideals toward which society ought to be striving.¹⁷

¹⁴ See Bernard Berelson, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, Chapter 14; Lipset, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–16; W. H. Morris-Jones, "In Defense of Apathy," *Political Studies*, II (1954), 25–37.

¹⁵ Milbrath, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

¹⁶ Louis Hartz, "Democracy: Image and Reality," in Chambers and Salisbury (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹⁷ Several articles have recently appeared which attack the elitist theory on normative grounds. The best and most insightful is Lane Davis, "The Cost of Realism: Contemporary Restatements of Democracy," *Western Political Quarterly*, 17 (1964), 37–46. Also see: Graeme Duncan and Steven Lukes, "The New Democracy," *Political Studies*, 11 (1963), 156–177; Steven W. Rousseas and James Farganis, "American Politics and the End of Ideology," *British Journal of Sociology*, 14 (1963), 347–360; and Christian Bay, "Politics and Pseudopolitics," *The American Political Science Review*, 59 (1965), 39–51. The subject is

The most distinctive feature, and the principal orienting value, of classical democratic theory was its emphasis on individual participation in the development of public policy. By taking part in the affairs of his society the citizen would gain in knowledge and understanding, develop a deeper sense of social responsibility, and broaden his perspective beyond the narrow confines of his private life. Although the classical theorists accepted the basic framework of Lockean democracy, with its emphasis on limited government, they were *not* primarily concerned with the *policies* which might be produced in a democracy; above all else they were concerned with human development, the opportunities which existed in political activity to realize the untapped potentials of men and to create the foundations of a genuine human community. In the words of John Stuart Mill:

. . . the most important point of excellence which any form of government can possess is to promote the virtue and intelligence of the people themselves. The first question in respect to any political institutions is how far they tend to foster in the members of the community the various desirable qualities, . . . moral, intellectual, and active.¹⁸

In the elitist version of the theory, however, emphasis has shifted to the needs and functions of the system as a whole; there is no longer a direct concern with human development. The central question is not how to design a political system which stimulates greater individual participation and enhances the moral development of its citizens, but how "to combine a substantial degree of popular participation with a system of power capable of governing *effectively* and *coherently*."¹⁹

The elitist theory allows the citizen only a passive role as an object of political activity; he exerts influence on policy making only by rendering judgements after the fact in national elections. The safety of

also treated in: Henry Kariel, *The Decline of American Pluralism* (Stanford, 1961), Chapters 9 and 11; T. B. Bottomore, *Elites and Society* (London, 1964), 108-110; Robert Presthus, *Men at the Top* (New York, 1964), 3-47; and Robert Agger, Daniel Goldrich and Bert Swanson, *The Rulers and the Ruled* (New York, 1964), 93-99, 524-532. For an insightful critique of the work of Dahl and Mills, conceived of as opposing ideological positions, see: William E. Connolly, *Responsible Political Ideology: Implications of the Sociology of Knowledge for Political Inquiry* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1965), pp. 18-39. This section of this article depends heavily on Lane Davis' analysis.

¹⁸ John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (New York, 1862), pp. 39-40.

¹⁹ Samuel Beer, "New Structures of Democracy: Britain and America," in Chambers and Salisbury (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 46.

contemporary democracy lies in the high-minded sense of responsibility of its leaders, the only elements of society who are actively striving to discover and implement the common good. The citizens are left to "judge a world they never made, and thus to become a genteel counterpart of the mobs which sporadically unseated aristocratic governments in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe."²⁰

The contemporary version of democratic theory has, it seems, lost much of the vital force, the radical thrust of the classical theory. The elitist theorists, in trying to develop a theory which takes account of the way the political system actually operates, have changed the principal orienting values of democracy. The heart of the classical theory was its justification of broad participation in the public affairs of the community; the aim was the production of citizens who were capable enough and responsible enough to play this role. The classical theory was not meant to describe any existing system of government; it was an outline, a set of prescriptions for the ideal polity which men should strive to create. The elitist theorists, in their quest for realism, have changed this distinctive prescriptive element in democratic theory; they have substituted stability and efficiency as the prime goals of democracy. If these revisions are accepted, the danger arises that in striving to develop more reliable explanations of political behavior, political scientists will also become sophisticated apologists for the existing political order. Robert Lane, in concluding his study of the political ideologies of fifteen "common men" in an Eastern city, observes that they lack a utopian vision, a well-defined sense of social justice that would allow them to stand in judgement on their society and its institutions.²¹ To some degree, the "men of Eastport" share this disability with much of the American academic elite.

II. THE ELITIST THEORY AS A GUIDE FOR RESEARCH

The shortcomings of the elitist theory are not confined to its normative implications. Serious questions also arise concerning its

²⁰ Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

²¹ Robert Lane, *Political Ideology* (New York, 1962), p. 475. See also Donald Stokes' comments on the same topic in "Popular Evaluations of Government: An Empirical Assessment," in Harlan Cleveland and Harold Lasswell (eds.), *Ethics and Bigness* (Published by the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion in their relation to the Democratic Way of Life, 1962), p. 72.

descriptive accuracy and its utility as a guide to empirical research. The most unsatisfactory element in the theory is its concept of the passive, apolitical, common man who pays allegiance to his governors and to the sideshow of politics while remaining primarily concerned with his private life, evenings of television with his family, or the demands of his job. Occasionally, when the average citizen finds his primary goals threatened by the actions or inactions of government, he may strive vigorously to influence the course of public policy, but "*Homo Civicus*" as Dahl calls him, "is not, by nature, a political animal."²²

It was the acceptance of this concept that led the elitist theorists to reject the traditional notion of consensus. It became implausible to argue that the citizenry is watchful and jealous of the great democratic values while at the same time suggesting that they are uninvolved, uninformed and apathetic. Widespread apathy also is said to contribute to democratic stability by insuring that the disagreements that arise during campaigns and elections will not involve large numbers of people or plunge the society into violent disorders or civil war.

No one can deny that there is widespread political apathy among many sectors of the American public. But it is important to ask why this is so and not simply to explain how this phenomenon contributes to the smooth functioning of the system. Of course, the citizens' passivity might stem from their satisfaction with the operation of the political system, and thus they would naturally become aroused only if they perceived a threat to the system. Dahl, for one, argues that the political system operates largely through "inertia," tradition, or habitual responses. It remains stable because only a few "key" issues are the objects of controversy at any one time, the rest of public policy having been settled and established in past controversies which are now all but forgotten. Similarly, Nelson Polsby argues that it is fallacious to assume that the quiescent citizens in a community, especially those in the lower income groups, have grievances unless they actually express them. To do so is to arbitrarily assign "upper- and middle-class values to all actors in the community."²³

But it is hard to believe, in these days of protest demonstrations, of Black Muslims and the Deacons of Defense and Justice, that the mood of cynical apathy toward politics which affects so many American

²² Dahl, *Who Governs?*, p. 225.

²³ Nelson Polsby, *Community Power and Political Theory* (New Haven, 1963), p. 117.

Negroes is an indication of their satisfaction with the political system, and with the weak, essentially meaningless alternatives it usually presents to them. To assume that apathy is a sign of satisfaction in this case is to overlook the tragic history of the Negroes in America and the system of violent repression long used to deny them any entrance into the regular channels of democratic decision-making.

Students of race relations have concluded that hostile attitudes toward a racial group do not necessarily lead to hostile actions, and amicable feelings do not ensure amicable actions. Instead, "it is the social demands of the situation, particularly when supported by accepted authority figures, which are the effective determinants of individual action. . . ." ²⁴ This insight might apply to other areas besides race relations. It suggests that a society's political culture, the general perceptions about the nature of authority and the prevailing expectations of significant reference groups, might be a major influence on the political behavior of the average citizen regardless of his own feelings of satisfaction or hostility. There have been sizable shifts in rates of political participation throughout American history which suggests that these rates are not rigidly determined. A recent analysis indicates that rates of voter participation are now *lower* than they were in the Nineteenth Century even though the population is now much better educated and the facilities for communication much better developed. ²⁵ Other studies indicate that there are marked differences in the political milieu of towns and cities which lead citizens of one area to exhibit much more cynicism and distrust of the political system than others. ²⁶ Although the studies showed no corresponding changes in feelings of political competence, cynical attitudes might inhibit many forms of participation and thus induce apathy.

Political apathy obviously has many sources. It may stem from

²⁴ Herbert Blumer, "Recent research [on race relations in the] United States of America," *International Social Science Bulletin* (UNESCO), 10 (1958), p. 432. Similar arguments concerning the relationship of beliefs and action can be found in J. D. Lohman and D. C. Reitzes, "Deliberately Organized Groups and Racial Behavior," *American Sociological Review*, 19 (1954), 342-344; and in Earl Raab (ed.), *American Race Relations Today* (Garden City, 1962).

²⁵ Walter Dean Burnham, "The Changing Shape of the American Political Universe," *The American Political Science Review*, 59 (1965), 7-28.

²⁶ Robert Agger, Marshall Goldstein and Stanley Pearl, "Political Cynicism: Measurement and Meaning," *The Journal of Politics*, 23 (1961), 477-506; and Edgar Litt, "Political Cynicism and Political Futility," *The Journal of Politics*, 25 (1963), 312-323.

feelings of personal inadequacy, from a fear of endangering important personal relationships, or from a lack of interest in the issues; but it may also have its roots in the society's institutional structure, in the weakness or absence of group stimulation or support, in the positive opposition of elements within the political system to wider participation; in the absence, in other words, of appropriate spurs to action, or the presence of tangible deterrents.²⁷ Before the causes of apathy can be established with confidence much more attention must be directed to the role of the mass media. How are the perceptions of individual citizens affected by the version of reality they receive, either directly or indirectly, from television, the national wire services, and the public schools²⁸—and how do these perceptions affect their motivations? Political scientists have also largely neglected to study the use of both legitimate and illegitimate sanctions and private intimidation to gain political ends. How do the activities of the police,²⁹ social workers, or elements of organized crime affect the desires and the opportunities available for individual political participation?

Certainly the apparent calm of American politics is not matched by our general social life, which is marked by high crime rates, numerous fads and crazes, and much intergroup tension.³⁰ One recent study showed that during the civil rights protests in Atlanta, Georgia, and Cambridge, Maryland, crime rates in the Negro communities dropped substantially.³¹ A finding of this kind suggests that there is some connection between these two realms of social conflict and that both

²⁷ For a brief survey of findings on this subject, see Milbrath, *op. cit.*; and for a clear, brief summary, see: Morris Rosenberg, "Some Determinants of Political Apathy," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 18 (1954-55), 349-366. Also see David Apter (ed.), *Ideology and Discontent* (New York, 1964), especially chapters by Converse and Wolfinger, *et al.*

²⁸ A major study of the influence of secondary schools on political attitudes is underway at the University of Michigan under the direction of M. Kent Jennings.

²⁹ An extensive investigation of the role of the police and the courts in city politics is being conducted at Harvard University by James Q. Wilson.

³⁰ It is very difficult to compare crime rates or other indications of social disorganization in the United States with those in other countries. For a discussion of some of the difficulties see: UNESCO 1963 *Report on the World Social Situation* (New York, 1963).

³¹ Fredric Solomon, Walter L. Walker, Garrett O'Connor and Jacob Fishman, "Civil Rights Activity and Reduction of Crime Among Negroes," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 12 (March, 1965), 227-236.

may serve as outlets for individual distress and frustration. High crime (or suicide) rates and low rates of voting may very well be related; the former may represent "leakage" from the political system.³²

Once we admit that the society is not based on a widespread consensus, we must look at our loosely organized, decentralized political parties in a different light. It may be that the parties have developed in this way precisely because no broad consensus exists. In a fragmented society which contains numerous geographic, religious and racial conflicts, the successful politician has been the man adept at negotiation and bargaining, the man best able to play these numerous animosities off against each other, and thereby build *ad hoc* coalitions of support for specific programs. Success at this delicate business of coalition building depends on achieving some basis for communication among the leaders of otherwise antagonistic groups and finding a formula for compromise. To create these circumstances sharp conflicts must be avoided; highly controversial, potentially explosive issues shunned. Controversy is shifted to other issues or the public authorities simply refuse to deal with the question, claiming that they have no legitimate jurisdiction in the case or burying it quietly in some committee room or bureaucratic pigeonhole.³³

In other words, one of the chief characteristics of our political system has been its success in suppressing and controlling internal conflict. But the avoidance of conflict, the suppression of strife, is *not* necessarily the creation of satisfaction or consensus. The citizens may remain quiescent, the political system might retain its stability, but significant differences of opinion remain, numerous conflicts are unresolved and many desires go unfulfilled. The frustrations resulting from such deprivations can create conflict in other, non-political realms.

³² For an excellent study of the Black Muslims which portrays the movement as a non-political outlet for the frustration and bitterness felt by many American Negroes see the study by an African scholar: E. V. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism: A Search for an Identity in America* (Chicago, 1962).

³³ Herbert Agar makes a similar analysis and argues for the retention of the system in *The Price of Union* (Boston, 1950). On page 689 he states: "The lesson which Americans learned [from the Civil War] was useful: in a large federal nation, when a problem is passionately felt, and is discussed in terms of morals, each party may divide within itself against itself. And if the parties divide, the nation may divide; for the parties, with their enjoyable pursuit of power, are a unifying influence. Wise men, therefore, may seek to dodge such problems as long as possible. And the easiest way to dodge them is for both parties to take both sides."

Fads, religious revivals, or wild, anomic riots such as those which occurred in the Negro ghettos of several large American cities during the summers of 1964 and 1965, phenomena not directly related to the achievement of any clearly conceived political goals, may be touched off by unresolved tensions left untended by the society's political leaders.

The American political system is highly complex, with conflicting jurisdictions and numerous checks and balances. A large commitment in time and energy must be made, even by a well-educated citizen, to keep informed of the issues and personalities in all levels of government. Most citizens are not able or willing to pay this kind of cost to gain the information necessary for effective political participation. This may be especially true in a political system in which weak or unclear alternatives are usually presented to the electorate. For most citizens the world of politics is remote, bewildering, and meaningless, having no direct relation to daily concerns about jobs or family life. Many citizens have desires or frustrations with which public agencies might be expected to deal, but they usually remain unaware of possible solutions to their problems in the public sphere. This group within our political system are citizens only from the legal point of view. If a high degree of social solidarity and sense of community are necessary for true democratic participation, then these marginal men are not really citizens of the state. The polity has not been extended to include them.³⁴ cf. Oke

For the elitist theorist widespread apathy is merely a fact of political life, something to be anticipated, a prerequisite for democratic stability. But for the classical democrat political apathy is an object of intense concern because the overriding moral purpose of the classical theory is to expand the boundaries of the political community and build the foundations for human understanding through participation by the citizens in the affairs of their government.

III. LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS

While most elitist theorists are agreed in conceiving of the average citizen as politically passive and uncreative, there seems to be a difference of opinion (or at least of emphasis) over the likelihood of some irrational, anti-democratic outburst from the society's common men.

³⁴ For a study of several important factors affecting the degree of participation in American politics see: E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People* (New York, 1960), especially chs. 5 and 6.

Dahl does not dwell on this possibility. He seemingly conceives of *homo civicus*, the average citizen, as a man who consciously chooses to avoid politics and to devote himself to the pleasures and problems of his job and family:

Typically, as a source of direct gratifications political activity will appear to *homo civicus* as less attractive than a host of other activities; and, as a strategy to achieve his gratifications indirectly political action will seem considerably less efficient than working at his job, earning more money, taking out insurance, joining a club, planning a vacation, moving to another neighborhood or city, or coping with an uncertain future in manifold other ways.³⁵

Lipset, on the other hand, seems much more concerned with the danger that the common man might suddenly enter the political system, smashing democratic institutions in the process, as part of an irrational, authoritarian political force. He sees "profoundly anti-democratic tendencies in lower class groups,"³⁶ and he has been frequently concerned in his work with Hitler, McCarthy and other demagogic leaders who have led anti-democratic mass movements.

Although there are obviously some important differences of opinion and emphasis concerning the political capacities of average citizens and the relative security of democratic institutions, the elitist theorists agree on the crucial importance of leadership in insuring both the safety and viability of representative government. This set of basic assumptions serves as a foundation for their explanation of change and innovation in American politics, a process in which they feel creative leadership plays the central role.

Running throughout the work of these writers is a vision of the "professional" politician as hero, much as he is pictured in Max Weber's essay, "Politics as a Vocation." Dahl's Mayor Lee, Edward Banfield's Mayor Daley, Richard Neustadt's ideal occupant of the White House all possess great skill and drive, and are engaged in the delicate art of persuasion and coalition building. They are actively moving the society forward toward their own goals, according to their own special vision. All of them possess the pre-eminent qualities of Weber's ideal-type politician: "passion, a feeling of responsibility, and a sense of proportion."³⁷ As in Schumpeter's analysis of capitalism, the primary source

³⁵ Dahl, *Who Governs?*, p. 224.

³⁶ Lipset, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

³⁷ Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York, 1946), p. 115.

of change and innovation in the political system is the "political entrepreneur"; only such a leader can break through the inherent conservatism of organizations and shake the masses from their habitual passivity.

It is obvious that political leaders (especially chief executives) have played a very important role in American politics, but it is also clear that the American system's large degree of internal bargaining, the lack of many strong hierarchical controls and its numerous checks and balances, both constitutional and political, place powerful constraints on the behavior of political executives. American presidents, governors and mayors usually find themselves caught in a web of cross pressures which prevent them from making bold departures in policy or firmly attaching themselves to either side of a controversy. The agenda of controversy, the list of questions which are recognized by the active participants in politics as legitimate subjects of attention and concern, is very hard to change.

Yes - so
what happens
the intelligent
one leaves

Just as it can be argued that the common citizens have a form of indirect influence, so it can also be argued that the top leaders of other institutions in the society, such as the business community, possess indirect influence as well. As Banfield suggests in his study of Chicago, the top business leaders have great potential power: "if the twenty or thirty wealthiest men in Chicago acted as one and put all their wealth into the fight, they could easily destroy or capture the machine."³⁸ The skillful politician, following Carl Friedrich's rule of anticipated reactions,"³⁹ is unlikely to make proposals which would unite the business community against him. The aspiring politician learns early in his career, by absorbing the folklore which circulates among the politically active, which issues can and cannot be exploited successfully. It is this constellation of influences and anticipated reactions, "the peculiar mobilization of bias" in the community, fortified by a general consensus of elites, that determines the agenda of controversy.⁴⁰ The American

³⁸ Edward Banfield, *Political Influence* (New York, 1961), p. 290.

³⁹ Carl Friedrich, *Constitutional Government and Politics* (New York, 1939), pp. 17-18.

⁴⁰ This point is made persuasively by Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, "The Two Faces of Power," *The American Political Science Review*, 56 (1962), 947-952. Also see their "Decisions and Nondecisions: An Analytical Framework," *The American Political Science Review*, 57 (1963), 632-642; and Thomas J. Anton, "Power, Pluralism and Local Politics," *Administrative Quarterly*, 7 (1963), 425-457.

political system, above all others, seems to be especially designed to frustrate the creative leader.

But as rigid and inflexible as it is, the political system does produce new policies; new programs and schemes are approved; even basic procedural changes are made from time to time. Of course, each major shift in public policy has a great many causes. The elitist theory of democracy looks for the principal source of innovation in the competition among rival leaders and the clever maneuvering of political entrepreneurs, which is, in its view, the most distinctive aspect of a democratic system. Because so many political scientists have worn the theoretical blinders of the elitist theory, however, we have overlooked the importance of broadly based social movements, arising from the public at large, as powerful agents of innovation and change.

The primary concerns of the elitist theorists have been the maintenance of democratic stability, the preservation of democratic procedures, and the creation of machinery which would produce efficient administration and coherent public policies. With these goals in mind, social movements (if they have been studied at all) have usually been pictured as threats to democracy, as manifestations of "political extremism." Lipset asserts that such movements typically appeal to the "disgruntled and the psychologically homeless, to the personal failures, the socially isolated, the economically insecure, the uneducated, unsophisticated, and authoritarian persons at every level of the society."⁴¹ Movements of this kind throw the political system out of gear and disrupt the mechanisms designed to maintain due process; if the elites were overwhelmed by such forces, democracy would be destroyed. This narrow, antagonistic view of social movements stems from the elitist theorists' suspicion of the political capacities of the common citizens,⁴²

⁴¹ Lipset, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

⁴² Ruth Searles and J. Allen Williams, in a study of Negro students who took part in the sit-in demonstrations, found no evidence that they were authoritarian or posed threats to democracy. "Far from being alienated, the students appear to be committed to the society and its middle class leaders": "Negro College Students' Participation in Sit-ins," *Social Forces*, 40 (1962), p. 219. For other studies of this particular social movement see: Robert Coles, "Social Struggle and Weariness," *Psychiatry*, 27 (1964), 305-315; and three articles by Fredric Solomon and Jacob Fishman; "Perspectives on Student Sit-in Movement," *American Journal of Ortho-psychiatry*, 33 (1963), 872-882; "Action and Identity Formation in First Student Sit-in Demonstration," *Journal of Social Issues*, 20 (1964), 36-45; and "Psychosocial Meaning of Nonviolence in Student Civil Rights Activities," *Psychiatry*, 27 (1964), 91-99. Also see the October, 1964 issue

their fear of instability and their failure to recognize the elements of rigidity and constraint existing in the political system. But if one holds that view and at the same time recognizes the tendency of the prevailing political system to frustrate strong leaders, it becomes difficult to explain how significant innovations in public policy, such as the social security system, the Wagner Act, the Subversive Activities Control Act of 1950, or the Civil Rights Bill of 1964, ever came about.

During the last century American society has spawned numerous social movements, some of which have made extensive demands on the political system, while others have been highly esoteric, mystical, and apolitical. These movements arise because some form of social dislocation or widespread sense of frustration exists within the society. But dissatisfaction alone is not a sufficient cause; it must be coupled with the necessary resources and the existence of potential leadership which can motivate a group to take action designed to change the offending circumstances.⁴³ Often such movements erupt along the margins of the political system, and they sometimes serve the purpose of encouraging political and social mobilization, of widening the boundaries of the polity.⁴⁴ Through movements such as the Negroes' drive for civil rights, or the Midwestern farmers' crusade for fair prices in the 1890's, the Ku Klux Klan, or the "radical right" movements of the 1960's, "pre-political

of *The Journal of Social Issues*, entitled "Youth and Social Action," edited by Fredric Solomon and Jacob Fishman; and Jack L. Walker, "Protest and Negotiation: A Case Study of Negro Leaders in Atlanta, Georgia," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 7 (1963), 99-124.

⁴³ Sociologists usually study social movements under the rubric of collective behavior. For general treatments see: Herbert Blumer, "Collective Behavior" in J. B. Gittler (ed.), *Review of Sociology* (New York, 1957); Rudolph Heberle, *Social Movements* (New York, 1951); Lewis Killian, "Social Movements" in Robert Faris (ed.), *Handbook of Modern Sociology* (Chicago, 1964); Charles King, *Social Movements in the United States* (New York, 1956); Karl Lang and Gladys Lang, *Collective Dynamics* (New York, 1961); Neil Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York, 1963); Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian, *Collective Behavior* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1957). For a brief historical sketch of some American social movements see: Thomas Greer, *American Social Reform Movements: Their Pattern Since 1865* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1946).

⁴⁴ For a book which investigates social movements that have served this function among Italian peasants see: E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (Manchester, 1959). See also: Vittorio Lanternari, *The Religions of the Oppressed* (New York, 1963) for a study of the relationship of Messianic Cults and revolutionary movements on five continents; and George Rude, *The Crowd in History* (New York, 1964) for a study of popular uprisings in England and France from 1730-1848.

people who have not yet found, or only begun to find, a specific language in which to express their aspirations about the world" ⁴⁵ are given new orientation, confidence, knowledge, sources of information and leadership.

Social movements also serve, in Rudolf Heberle's words, as the "creators and carriers of public opinion." ⁴⁶ By confronting the political authorities, or by locking themselves in peaceful—or violent ⁴⁷—conflict with some other element of the society, social movements provoke trials of strength between contending forces or ideas. Those trials of economic, political or moral strength take place in the court of public opinion and sometimes place enormous strain on democratic institutions and even the social fabric itself. But through such trials, as tumultuous as they may sometimes be, the agenda of controversy, the list of acceptable, "key" issues may be changed. In an effort to conciliate and mediate, the political leaders fashion new legislation, create unique regulatory bodies and strive to establish channels of communication and accommodation among the combatants.

Of course, members of the political elite may respond to the movement by resisting it, driving it underground or destroying it; they may try to co-opt the movement's leaders by granting them privileges or by accepting parts of its program, or even by making the leaders part of the established elite; they may surrender to the movement, losing control of their offices in the political system in the process. The nature of the political leader's response is probably a prime determinant of the tactics the movement will adopt, the kind of leadership that arises within it, and the ideological appeals it develops. Other factors might determine the response of the leadership, such as the existence of competing social movements with conflicting demands, the resources available to the political leaders to satisfy the demands of the movement, the social status of the participants in the movement, the presence of competing sets of leaders claiming to represent the same movement, and many other elements peculiar to each particular situation. In this process

⁴⁵ Hobsbawn, *op. cit.*, p. 2. ⁴⁶ Heberle, *op. cit.*, pp. 417–418.

⁴⁷ American political scientists have not been sufficiently concerned with the role of violence in the governmental process. Among all the articles published in *The American Political Science Review* between 1906 and 1963, there was only one whose title contained the word "violence," only one with the word "coercive" (it concerned India), and none with the word "force." During the same period there were forty-nine articles on governmental reorganization and twenty-four on civil service reform. See Kenneth Janda (ed.), *Cumulative Index to The American Political Science Review* (Evanston, 1964). Efforts to retrieve this situation have begun in: Harry Eckstein (ed.), *Internal War* (New York, 1964).

social movements may be highly disruptive and some institutions may be completely destroyed; the story does not always have a happy ending. But one major consequence (function, if you will) of social movements is to break society's logjams, to prevent ossification in the political system, to prompt and justify major innovations in social policy and economic organization.⁴⁸

This relationship of challenge and response between the established political system and social movements has gone without much systematic study by political scientists. Sociologists have been concerned with social movements, but they have directed most of their attention to the causes of the movements, their "natural history," and the relationship between leaders and followers within them.⁴⁹ Historians have produced many case studies of social movements but little in the way of systematic explanation.⁵⁰ This would seem to be a fruitful area for investigation by political scientists. But this research is not likely to appear unless we revise our concept of the masses as politically inert, apathetic and bound by habitual responses. We must also shift our emphasis from theories which conceive of the "social structure in terms of a functionally integrated system held in equilibrium by certain patterned and recurrent processes," to theories which place greater emphasis on the role of coercion and constraint in the political system and which concentrate on the influences within society which produce "the forces that maintain it in an unending process of change."⁵¹ The greatest contribution of Marx to the understanding of society was his realization that internal conflict is a major source of change and

⁴⁸ Lewis Coser has discussed the role of conflict in provoking social change in his *The Functions of Social Conflict* (Glencoe: 1956); and in his "Social Conflict and the Theory of Social Change," *British Journal of Sociology*, 9 (1957) 197-207. See also Irving Louis Horowitz, "Consensus, Conflict and Cooperation: A Sociological Inventory," *Social Forces*, 41 (1962), 177-188.

⁴⁹ For an insightful and stimulating example, see Joseph Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade* (Urbana, 1963), which makes an excellent analysis of the causes of the Temperance movement and changes in its leadership but makes only brief mention of the movement's impact on the government and the responses of political leaders to its efforts.

⁵⁰ John Higham is somewhat of an exception to this generalization. See his *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925* (New York, 1963). Also see his: "Another Look at Nativism," *Catholic Historical Review*, 44 (1958), 147-158; and his "The Cult of the 'American Consensus': Homogenizing Our History," *Commentary* (February, 1959), p. 159.

⁵¹ Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Stanford, 1959), p. 159.

innovation. One need not accept his metaphysical assumptions to appreciate this important insight.

IV. CONCLUSION

In a society undergoing massive social change, fresh theoretical perspectives are essential. Political theorists are charged with the responsibility of constantly reformulating the dogmas of the past so that democratic theory remains relevant to the stormy realities of Twentieth Century American society with its sprawling urban centers, its innumerable social conflicts, and its enormous bureaucratic hierarchies.

In restating the classical theory, however, contemporary political scientists have stripped democracy of much of its radical *élan* and have diluted its utopian vision, thus rendering it inadequate as a guide to the future. The elitist theorists generally accept the prevailing distribution of status in the society (with exceptions usually made for the American Negro), and find it "not only compatible with political freedom but even . . . a condition of it."⁵² They place great emphasis on the limitations of the average citizen and are suspicious of schemes which might encourage greater participation in public affairs. Accordingly, they put their trust in the wisdom and energy of an active, responsible elite.

Besides these normative shortcomings the elitist theory has served as an inadequate guide to empirical research, providing an unconvincing explanation of widespread political apathy in American society and leading political scientists to ignore manifestations of discontent not directly related to the political system. Few studies have been conducted of the use of force, or informal, illegitimate coercion in the American political system, and little attention has been directed to the great social movements which have marked American society in the last one hundred years.

If political science is to be relevant to society's pressing needs and urgent problems, professional students of politics must broaden their perspectives and become aware of new problems which are in need of scientific investigation. They must examine the norms that guide their efforts and guard against the danger of uncritically accepting the values of the going system in the name of scientific objectivity. Political scientists must strive for heightened awareness and self-knowledge; they

⁵² Sabine, "The Two Democratic Traditions," *op. cit.*, p. 459.

must avoid rigid presumptions which diminish their vision, destroy their capacities for criticism, and blind them to some of the most significant social and political developments of our time.

[See also "Further Reflections on 'The Elitist Theory of Democracy'" by Robert A. Dahl in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. LX, No. 2; and "A Reply to 'Further Reflections on 'The Elitist Theory of Democracy'" in the same volume by Jack L. Walker. In the "Reply," Mr. Walker concedes that the title "The Elitist Theory of Democracy" was inappropriate but reaffirms that the doctrines with which he was concerned were: "(1) the belief that the political inactivity of the average citizen is a more or less permanent aspect of his behavior, not an artifact of the social and political systems; (2) the related belief that political inactivity is a sign of satisfaction with the operation of the political system, a form of passive consent; (3) the belief that political apathy is not seriously dysfunctional in a democratic system and, on the part of some writers, the belief that widespread apathy may be a prerequisite for the successful functioning of the system; (4) the belief that agreement on democratic norms among political leaders is more important than consensus among the common citizens for achieving political stability; and (5) an overriding concern with maintaining the stability of democratic systems."—EDITORS' NOTE.]

Maure L. Goldschmidt

Democratic Theory and Contemporary Political Science

Last summer, Richard Goodwin, then one of President Johnson's assistants, announced that the "great society" had run out of ideas about what to do with itself. "We are not sure where we are going," he said, and added, "It is not the job of politicians to create brand new ideas. The most successful leaders take the best thoughts and most hopeful dreams of others, merge this with their instinctive sense of need and possibility and from this fusion help guide the movement of society." He concluded: "We know there are new problems, but the intellectual resources of this nation—the historic reservoir of social progress—do not readily provide the answers."¹

Anyone reading the postwar normative literature of political science and comparing its recommendations or lack thereof with the recent course of public policy must be struck by its irrelevance. It is as if the makers of public policy were not aware of the fact that leading members of the profession have announced that apathy, non-voting and poor education are a good thing, i.e., system sustaining, and that we should be most cautious about consciously inducing social change because of the danger of unstabilizing the political system.

¹ Quoted by Richard Rovere in his Letter from Washington, the *New Yorker*, August 14, 1965, pp. 117–18.

SOURCE: *The Western Political Quarterly*, XIX, 3 Supplement (1966), 5–12. Reprinted with permission of the University of Utah, copyright owners. Originally given as a presidential address at the twentieth annual meeting of the Western Political Science Association, 1966.

Maure L. Goldschmidt is professor of political science at Reed College.

We find ourselves, therefore, in a somewhat paradoxical situation. On the one hand, there is a great liberal forward movement at the political level with more new and far-reaching legislation than at any time since the early New Deal. On the other hand, we have a conservative political theory which not only offers no guidance but is actually discouraging of change and innovation. The situation is further complicated by the fact that most political scientists in their hearts—if I may use a now discredited phrase—approve of the new programs even though their writings do not support them.

How have we gotten into this situation in which the main thrust of normative speculation is conservative rather than favorable to change? Before World War II, I think it is fair to say, the opposite situation prevailed. What then are the causes of post-World War II conservatism? In the first place, there was the usual let-down from the idealism generated during the war to sustain the struggle. In the second place, the cold war brought about a strong anticommunist reaction from American liberals which took the form of an idealization of the American status quo. The heightening of anticommunist hysteria after the fall of China and Czechoslovakia brought with it McCarthyism and fear among hitherto liberal intellectuals. Furthermore, the enlistment of academics in the cold war contributed an additional set of rationalizations to the conservative position. Another factor which may have influenced the trend was the steady decline of alienation among academic intellectuals. In contrast to the situation in the thirties, there have been plenty of jobs since the war and jobs open to all. The decline of discrimination in academic employment has been a distinctive feature of the postwar situation. The increased prestige of academics as consultants and advisors has confirmed the sense of well-being and the demand for their services has satisfied the desires of many for influence and power.

As a result there has been a steady development and widespread acceptance of conservative ideas. The revival of the doctrine of original sin, the attack on ideology and Utopian thought, the criticism of left-wing democracy or populism, the emphasis on tradition, and on Burkean modes of thought, the preference for elitism and the emphasis on the incompetence of the mass of the voters, are all examples of conservative notions which have greatly influenced contemporary political science.

The greatly increased concern with methodology has had similar consequences for normative thought. It has resulted in the transfer of

Utopian longings from the sphere of ideal society to that of an ideal science of politics. Professor David Easton, for example, is not satisfied with a science of politics which might attain the generality and rigor of economics, but aspires to an even more universal and presumably more rigorous science.² The behavioral orientation tends to assume the fixity of political institutions and to study behavior within the limits fixed by these structures. Its emphasis on the equilibrium mode of analysis, on functionalism and on systems, tends to concentrate attention on stability rather than change and to ignore historical development. It also tends to see anything which exists, particularly if it has existed for a long time, as functional and system-sustaining and, hence, good.³

As my last remarks indicate, I am more interested in the normative ideas of empirical political scientists than in those of specialists in political philosophy, not because the former are more profound but because they are more influential. However, it should be pointed out that the most important work in political philosophy since the war has been done by conservative writers like Professor Leo Strauss and Dr. Hannah Arendt in this country and Professor Michael Oakeshott in Great Britain. Although these individuals are all scholars of stature and distinction, their impact on the discipline has been slight. They do not talk the right language. Their approach is not in the dominant American tradition of empiricism and positivism. I propose therefore to discuss the normative views of several American political scientists, who have thought seriously about democratic theory and whose standing in the profession insures them a sympathetic audience. I refer to Dr. Bernard Berelson, Professors Almond and Verba, and Professor Edward Banfield.

The last chapter of Berelson's book on *Voting* contains a revision of classical democratic theory which is similar in many respects to the final chapter of Almond and Verba's *The Civic Culture*. The authors of both books acknowledge a common inspiration, namely, the ideas of Professor Edward Shils. Both books take as their point of departure the inadequacies and indeed the dangers of classical democratic theory as revealed by their empirical studies and hence the need for a more adequate normative theory of democracy.

²David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (New York: Wiley, 1965), fn. 6, pp. 477-78, and pp. 479 ff.

³I want to emphasize that I refer to tendencies and not logical necessities. I am aware of the fact that students of underdeveloped societies are using functional analysis and are concerned with change.

What then is the case which our authors make against classical democratic theory? The requirements of this theory, according to Berelson, include for the individual a high level of interest, capacity for and practice of discussion, and strong motivation for participation in political life. The individual is expected to participate on the basis of knowledge, to cast his vote on the basis of principle with reference to the common good, and to decide questions in a rational way. On all of these points, Berelson gives the voters poor to fair marks, recognizing that these characteristics are differentially distributed in the population. He argues that, although the individual voters are unable to satisfy the requirements of classical democratic theory, nevertheless the system of democracy functions effectively. He says:

If the democratic system depended solely on the qualifications of the individual voter, then it seems remarkable that democracy has survived through the centuries. After examining the detailed data on how individuals misperceive political reality, or respond to irrelevant social influences, one wonders how a democracy ever solves its political problems. But when one considers the data in a broader perspective—how huge sections of the society adapt to political conditions affecting them or how the political system adjusts itself to changing conditions over long periods of time—he cannot fail to be impressed with the total results. Where the rational citizen seems to abdicate, nevertheless angels seem to tread.⁴

According to Berelson, we are faced with a paradox—incompetent citizens produce competent government. This is reminiscent of the famous paradox of Mandeville and the classical economists—private vices are public virtues.

One of the important requirements of the political system, according to Berelson and Almond, is a voting population that is heterogeneous in its political qualities rather than homogeneous as classical democratic theory prescribes. Some voters must be highly interested, others less interested and some not at all, because, if everybody were highly interested, there might be too much extreme partisanship and fanaticism which could destroy the democratic system. The highly interested voter, although he knows more about the campaign and participates more, is less open to persuasion and change and is presumably more fanatical and intolerant. But people who are less interested and participate less, are more flexible and more open to

⁴ B. Berelson, P. F. Lazarsfeld, and W. N. McPhee, *Voting* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 311.

persuasion since they are more indifferent to the outcome. Indeed, the apathetic segment has made a valuable contribution to maintaining our system by cushioning the shock of disagreement and change. While we cannot stand "apathy without limit," still the present level is a good thing.⁵ Berelson's conclusion is that the requirements of classical democratic theory are more appropriate for the opinion leaders than for all the voters.

Zurkean Berelson's concern with the problems of system maintenance rather than change is typical of much contemporary functional analysis. A striking application of the same point of view is to be found in a recent essay by Professor Edward Banfield entitled "In Defense of the American Party System." He argues that planning social change is not only difficult but dangerous because we cannot foresee the consequences of even very small changes and we may end up destroying the stability of the existing social system.

Social relationships constitute systems: they are mutually related in such a manner that a change in one tends to produce changes in all of the others. If we change the party system in one respect, even a seemingly trivial one, we are likely to set in motion a succession of changes which will not come to an end until the whole system has been changed. The party system, moreover, is an element of a larger political system and of a social system. A small change in the structure or operation of parties may have important consequences for, say, the family, religion, or the business firm.⁶

Zurke Professor Banfield goes on to argue that if a political system works well on the whole, that is, has survived and has produced good results, such as maintaining order, moderating conflict, not interfering with economic growth, avoiding mob rule or tyranny, and adapting to changed circumstances, one should not meddle with it. "Because the system is intricate beyond comprehension," he says, "the chance of improving it in the ways intended is slight, whereas the danger of disturbing its working and of setting off a succession of unwanted effects that will extend throughout the whole society is great."⁷ Things

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 322; G. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1963), pp. 474-75, 478-79, 481, 488-89.

⁶ Edward C. Banfield, "In Defense of the American Party System" in Robert A. Goldwin (ed.), *Political Parties, U.S.A.* (New York: Rand McNally, 1964), p. 23.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

are for the best in the best of all possible worlds, so let's forget about trying to make changes in any systematic way.

I now propose to examine these views, first, from the point of view of empirical political science and then to have a look at them from the normative point of view. Let us begin with Berelson's analysis of the role of the relatively uninterested, passive citizen. He suggests that the indifferent, the ignorant, the apathetic voters play a significant system-sustaining role because of their flexibility and lack of dogmatic attachment to principle. The ideal citizen of classical democratic theory, on the other hand, tends to be dogmatic and fanatical and, if this type were to become general, the stability of the system would be endangered.

Berelson's own data cast doubt on the validity of his conclusions. They show that the undecided voters who include a large number of the indifferents divide in accordance with the decideds, i.e., "they move with the trend of the times the most."⁸ In other words, their choices are influenced by those who have more information, interest, etc. *delegating*

Furthermore, Stauffer's study of *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties* indicates that the educated, the informed, and the active are the more tolerant and flexible and that the less well-educated are the more intolerant, rigid, etc. Stauffer's findings lend weight to the conclusion that, although the better educated may be more partisan in the sense of loyalty to party, they are less dogmatic and partisan in the sense of rigid ideological commitment. His findings as well as Berelson's would appear to support the classical democratic preference for the interested, active, educated citizen and to refute the revisionist views of the advocates of the Civic Culture.

Banfield's views illustrate one of the dangers of systems theory or, as it used to be called, organismic theory. The concept of system is only an analogy useful for heuristic purposes. It belongs to the meta realm rather than the empirical, although Banfield treats it as if it belonged to the latter. The extent to which various aspects of society are actually interrelated has to be determined by empirical research, not merely assumed dogmatically. Fortunately, human societies lack the high degree of integration which Banfield assumes. I say fortunately, because highly integrated organisms lack the capacity to change themselves in important ways like human societies. One has only to compare the changes in any biological organism with those in human society in any given period of time to appreciate the difference. Hence, the systems

⁸ Berelson *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

analogy has only a limited usefulness for understanding society and particularly for dealing effectively with change.⁹

Professor Banfield surely knows that deliberate and significant changes affecting the party system have been made without the horrendous consequences he fears. One needs only to mention the changes in nominating procedures from caucus to convention to direct primary, the changes in registration procedures, and the changes in the procedures of Congress.

This brief analysis has, I think, indicated the ideological character of the propositions we have been examining. Berelson's views about the positive role of the indifferent, apathetic voter and Banfield's warnings against change may more profitably be considered as justifications of the status quo, than as scientific propositions.

The Berelson-Almond theory of the positive role of the uncommitted and indifferent reminds one of Aristotle's view of democracy.¹⁰ Although he was critical of democracy in principle, he did have some kind words for agricultural democracy because it was the least democratic of all the forms of democracy. Where most people engage in farming, they do not have time to participate actively in politics and to attend the assembly regularly. "Farmers," he says, "not having any great amount of property, are busily occupied; and they have, thus, no time for attending the assembly. Not possessing the necessities of life, they stick to their work, and do not covet what does not belong to them; indeed, they find more pleasure in work than they do in politics and government—unless there are large pickings to be got from having a finger in government."¹¹ Government is, therefore, left to the better sort who have the leisure and aptitude which it requires.

It may help to put our authors in perspective if we compare their ideas with those of Burke, the founder of modern conservatism. Burke identifies the ideal with the existent, in contrast to the classical democratic rejection of the notion that right can be derived from fact. Our

⁹ In response to this kind of criticism Almond has suggested some ways of dealing with change in the systems framework. See G. A. Almond, "A Developmental Approach to Political Systems," *World Politics*, January 1965, pp. 183-214.

¹⁰ The Berelson-Almond view was put forward in the 1930's by the well-known conservative writer, Francis Wilson. See his essay, "The Inactive Electorate and Social Revolution," *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, 16 (1936), pp. 73-84.

¹¹ *Politics*, 1318B (Barker, ed.), p. 263.

authors are clearly on the side of Burke. As Almond and Verba put it:

How can we explain the discrepancy between the ideals of the rationality-activist model and the patterns of political attitude we actually find, even in the more stable and successful democracies? One possible explanation, and the one most often found in the literature on civic education, is that this discrepancy is evidence of the malfunctioning of democracy. Insofar as people do not live up to the ideal of the active citizen, democracy is a failure. If one believes that the realities of political life should be molded to fit one's theories of politics, such an explanation is satisfactory. But, if one holds to the view that theories of politics should be drawn from the realities of political life—a somewhat easier and probably more useful task—then this explanation of a gap between the rationality-activist model and democratic realities is less acceptable. From the latter point of view, one would probably argue that the gap exists because the standards have been set unreasonably high.¹³

The ideal state for Burke is the outcome of the slowly evolving, unplanned adaptation of society and government to changing circumstances. It is not the intelligence and foresight of individuals which are responsible for our being in the best of all possible worlds, but rather the providential character of the universe. Berelson strikes a similar note in explaining the paradox of incompetent citizens and an effectively operating political system when he says, "Where the rational citizen seems to abdicate, nevertheless angels seem to tread."¹³

Burke's analysis is, of course, elitist in character. There are certain individuals and groups who, by virtue of inheritance and status, are fit to rule. They possess not only the necessary intelligence but the sympathy which enables them to represent the interests and desires of the whole population. Hence, he favors virtual, rather than actual, representation. Almond and Verba recognize the importance of a politically active class with power to rule. They can exercise power effectively only if the masses "are relatively passive, uninvolved and deferential."¹⁴ However, if democracy is to be meaningful, there must be some check on the power of the elites. This consists in the assumption of an active role by some citizens and the belief on the part of others that they can influence the behavior of their leaders, if they so desire. Almond and Verba, however, think that this belief is, in part at least, a myth. Accordingly,

¹³ Almond and Verba, *op. cit.*, pp. 475-76.

¹³ Berelson *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

¹⁴ Almond and Verba, *op. cit.*, pp. 478-79.

they present us with a picture of an ideal democracy whose rulers are chosen by only a part of the citizens, many of whom are indifferent about their choice, a polity in which rulers are ineffectively controlled by their followers who are partially deluded in believing that they can control them if they wish. This ideal democratic elite seems to have much in common with Burke's ideal oligarchy. Like the latter, it presumably represents the indifferent and the apathetic virtually if not actually. Although Almond and Verba do not commit themselves to the theory of virtual representation, one wonders whether such a view is not implied by their account of democratic leadership.¹⁵

Finally, Burke regards society as an organism or system in which the parts are intimately interrelated. Because of the complexity and closeness of the interrelationships and because of the weakness of individual intelligence and foresight, he views proposals for deliberate change with great caution. Presumably, Berelson and Almond and certainly Banfield would agree.

The idealization of the status quo does not completely rule out change. It simply de-emphasizes it and assigns it a relatively insignificant role. Apparently any changes which the system can accept without too much difficulty are all right. However, the substance of these changes is nowhere specified in terms of democratic or any other goals. The public interest is reduced to a hypothetical conception of balance or equilibrium. Berelson speaks of "enough consensus to hold the system together and enough cleavage to make it move."¹⁶

We have tried to point out some similarities between the views of our authors and those of Burke. There are, of course, some important differences. Burke was trying to conserve an aristocratic regime; Berelson, Almond and Banfield are trying to conserve a democratic one. Nevertheless, their attitude toward it is significant. In contrast to classical democratic theory, they see democracy as already achieved; the main problem, therefore, is to preserve it. Classical democratic theory, on the other hand, sees democracy as a never-ending process of achieving, as a dynamic striving for the goals of liberty, equality, and frater-

¹⁵ In virtual representation, "There is a communion of interests and a symphony in feelings and desires, between those who act in the name of any description of people, and the people in whose name they act, though the trustees are not actually chosen by them." Burke, Letter to Sir Hector Langrishe, 1797, *Works*, Vol. 4, p. 293—quoted by A. de Grazia, *Public and Republic*, pp. 43-44.

¹⁶ Berelson *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

nity and for a continuous concern with the improvements of the means of achievement.

The need for the revival of a dynamic democratic theory which will point the way for the next generation is pressing. In a rapidly changing society, characterized by technological innovation and great mobility of population, serious social problems are bound to arise. There is a growing feeling in the country that racial discrimination, poor education, inadequate medical care, degrading poverty and unemployment, bad housing and urban slums, air and water pollution, and the defacement of the landscape are unnecessary and even intolerable in a wealthy country like ours committed to democratic values.

Have we, as a profession, given any leadership to public opinion or guidance to government in these matters? A little, but not much. Some of us have been concerned with the right to vote and reapportionment, some with urban problems and a few continue an interest in administrative reform. But the attitude of a large number has been conservative—either content with the status quo institutionally and policy-wise, or content to ignore policy questions altogether.

We cannot expect political scientists to produce elaborate blueprints of the future. We lack the competence to do so and, in any case, such efforts would be of questionable value. There is, however, an intermediate range of activity, where the study of specific problems, if infused with a strong sense of democratic values, may be expected to contribute something to the policy-making process. We might expect that their familiarity with the democratic heritage would enable political scientists to draw out its implications for today and tomorrow in the light of developing conditions.

Unfortunately, it cannot be said that most political scientists concern themselves with the study of the democratic heritage. If they do, they are more likely to be impressed with those aspects of it which are time, space, and class bound and hence now largely irrelevant than with its more lasting and universal aspects. What are these more lasting principles? Without attempting a full statement, I think they include, first of all, an emphasis on the value of every individual and the importance of his freedom and self-determination. What stands out in the writings of Rousseau, Kant, Jefferson, and the Mills is their belief in the importance of the autonomy of the individual.

Secondly, their confidence that, in spite of all his weaknesses, man is sufficiently rational to develop and utilize social and political institu-

tions to better his lot, and to do so in such a way as to preserve and even enhance his autonomy.

Thirdly, the recognition that the tendencies inhering in society are in the direction of economic inequality, and hence, the function of government must be to offset this trend and work for equality. As Rousseau put it: "It is precisely because the force of circumstances tends continuously to destroy equality that the force of legislation should always tend to its maintenance." ¹⁷

And finally, the classical democrats recognized that the democratic ideal was an ideal to be striven for and not ever fully realized. This meant a ceaseless effort to move in its direction, not smug satisfaction with what has already been achieved. The function of the ideal was to act as an operative criticism of society and an inspiration for its improvement.

Today the great challenge to our system is the Negro's demand for the fulfillment of the promises inherent in the democratic creed. It is not enough to say to them, with Berelson, that "Change may come best from relaxation." ¹⁸ That is too reminiscent of the silent, uncommitted fifties. It is certainly not enough to say with Almond and Verba that "it may just not be worth it to be that good a citizen." ¹⁹ We have to make it worthwhile for the estranged, the apathetic, the poverty-stricken, and the uneducated. "What is really at stake," says Mr. Tom Wicker of the *New York Times*, "is not just the fortunes of 20 million black Americans, or the protection of property, or the maintenance of some tenuous racial peace, important as these things are. What is at stake is the ability of the American idea expressed in thousands of legal, social, political and economic institutions to function." ²⁰

If political science is to make any contribution to the attainment of this goal, there will have to be a considerable shift from the currently popular posture of satisfaction with the status quo. Reinhold Niebuhr has said that the Civil Rights Movement has revived Christianity. Perhaps it will revive democratic theory—and even political science.

¹⁷ *The Social Contract*, Everyman edition, p. 50.

¹⁸ Berelson *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

¹⁹ Almond and Verba, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

²⁰ Column in *Seattle Times*, August 19, 1965.

F O U R

The New Political Theory of the Behavioralists

Professor Greaves is critical of "that new and negative kind of political theory . . . [which argues] that nothing can usefully be said about values." On the contrary, he urges, there is now more than ever a need for a responsible and constructive political theory. In spite of the difficulties imposed on such an undertaking by our present intellectual climate, Professor Greaves stresses the point that this is a task for which the political scientist is particularly suited. With the aid of related disciplines available, he cannot and should not abandon his responsibilities.

H. R. G. Greaves

Political Theory Today

I

Justified or not, it is certainly a current view that there have recently been no significant contributions to political theory either in England or in America. Thus, Noel Annan: "What has characterised Western political thought since 1945? The almost total collapse of political philosophy—in the sense that Mill or Green or Marx wrote it."¹ Or, in a review of Hans J. Morgenthau's *Dilemmas of Politics*: "He insists that the empirical study of politics requires a philosophic framework, and that generally it doesn't exist. Admittedly theory holds its place in the curriculum, but it is historical and traditional with little meaning for our time."² The political theory here referred to is, of course, what used to be understood by that term. That is something which is morally and philosophically oriented and useful for guiding social action. It is something concerned with values, that leads to beliefs, that seeks a rational and empirical structure from which to recommend.

It is not that new and negative kind of political theory which takes the form of arguing that nothing can usefully be said about values, for they are just what is accepted in the society in which we live; that nothing can be prescribed or recommended, save acquiescence. Yet this rejection of rationalism—for that is surely what it is—by this kind of

¹ *The Listener*, February 19, 1959, p. 323.

² By M. R. Merrill, in *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. XII, No. 2, p. 617.

SOURCE: *The Political Science Quarterly*, LXXV, 1 (March, 1960), 1–16. Reprinted with permission. Revised version of an address given at Columbia University in October 1959 at the invitation of the Faculty of Philosophy.

At the time the address was delivered, the author was visiting professor of government at Columbia University. He is now professor of political science at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

political theory is both symptom and cause of an attitude spreading beyond it. Instances are all around us today. Thus Mr. Justice Devlin lately asserted, in his Maccabaeon lecture, that society should not be expected to give its reasons for condemning some practice which it dislikes. It is enough that the practice is regarded as intolerable. And the Lord Chief Justice of England has recently advised British magistrates that they should have regard only to their own personal views when determining their sentences, and should disregard anything else, including the reversal of their actions by higher courts. By implication the burning of witches, racial discrimination, and the Lord Chief Justice's own wish to reimpose judicial birching could be justified by the mere emotional preference of any society for that course. That is so even though perhaps some, basically holding this opinion, would more guardedly add that the society must have it somewhere in its tradition to act in this way. For this ethical relativism is logically of a piece with that negative kind of political theory which tells us that there are no truths or principles suitable for orientation, susceptible of rational demonstration, that all we can do is to look to custom. It leads us to the conclusion that we are, whether as individuals or as societies, upon an uncharted sea, drifting rudderless and undirected, whither we know not, at the mercy of winds and currents which we cannot control even if—and here too there is doubt—we can comprehend them. Such political theory seems, we may think, like Burke without the belief in providence, Hegel without the dialectic, or to be a historicism which finds in history evidence neither of freedom of choice nor of predetermined pattern.

For this negative kind of political theory we do not lack. It is negative in the sense that it cannot prescribe or recommend upon any rational grounds. It cannot establish criteria for testing political institutions or behavior in terms of the ends they serve or the purposes to which they are directed. Indeed, it makes its central theme the denial of the existence of any rational criteria. But since political studies are unavoidably concerned with societies which because they live must act, any such denial of criteria must itself be a prescription—of acceptance, of acquiescence. It is a direction not to direct. It is the act of deciding not to act. In the long run or the short, its consequence must be to persuade the student of political theory not to study political theory. Or at least its effect must be to claim that only that kind of political theory is a profitable exercise which shows up another political theory as having been an unprofitable exercise.

It would hardly be surprising—such an attitude to political theory being prevalent as I think it is—if political theory itself were to languish and become unfashionable. Whether or not there are deep social causes behind this dearth of political theory in the past more positive, creative and directional understanding of the term, such as a post-war impatience with beliefs and a desire to get on with prosperity, there can be no doubt that it exists. But we must not forget that this negative kind of political theory is political theory also. It is certainly more prevalent than it is articulated; perhaps because there is a more severe limit set to writing books about what political theory is not than about what it is. We do seem, however, to be moving to a position in the subject rather like that reached by abstract art, where a prize has been given for a black and completely unadorned canvas as the best work of the year.

II

If, then, we understand the dearth of political theory in some such manner as this, to what is it due? There are, I suggest, several contributing causes.

The first is the very success of political science itself. By this I mean for the moment, although I would not confine political science to this, the formidable growth in the volume of behavioral studies and the improvement in the techniques they employ. Many, if not all, of these shed useful light upon the working of institutions or the operation of forces, sometimes too upon attitudes, ideas and policies. Even if they often confirm what we already knew, they serve to verify, to render more exact, occasionally to moderate and to induce a healthy caution into the processes of generalization. They depict regularities and, within narrower limits than is always realized, they may serve as bases for prediction. Akin to them is the growth of what has come to be called political sociology, though I am not sure that this differs in any essential way from what has always belonged to the descriptive side of politics. The significant point about this sociological approach is its impatience with the dichotomy between man-the-individual and the state, its particular application of the pluralist theory by way of the study of group-organizations and social institutions which, without necessarily altering legal systems or political structure, yet influence the way they work and materially affect the place of the citizen in the state, that more narrowly political relationship in which each has impact on the other.

Now the characteristic of these developments is the emphasis they lay on one part of the field of political studies, the purely descriptive. This part is, of course, a fundamental part, but it is only a part. Such, however, has been the fascination of, and the facility provided for, this kind of study that it has led to several consequences relevant to what we are considering here. First, it has deflected thought and research in this direction where neat and tidy results could be achieved, easy to assess as contributions to knowledge and raising no tiresome controversial issues or possible allegations of political bias; and so it has to some extent discouraged adventure into the more speculative and risky areas where political thought touches upon morals, philosophy, ethics, psychology, aesthetics, jurisprudence. Secondly, it has produced so much that this has had something of a snowball effect. The very volume of material has made it an increasingly time- and energy-absorbing process for the student of politics merely to keep abreast of the work done, let alone to pursue the new lanes and byways opened up. Thirdly, the myth of a "value-free" political science has been given a greater credibility. It has been insufficiently understood how far description in this field is dependent for significance upon analysis and explanation into which values enter.

Here is the root of the deflection from political theory to political science. It lies in the misguided attempt to assimilate political studies to the natural sciences. If it dates from Hobbes and Newton, it has been clearly accelerated in the century since Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and seems to have been brought to its climax by additional developments of more recent times through a process of delayed and cumulative action. Just because we see so clearly the inadequacies of the theories of "necessary" or predetermined political evolution propounded by men like Herbert Spencer and Karl Marx we underestimate the influence upon the climate of present-day opinion of the idea, belief, or attitude they shared. If we live in a historically determined world, what is more natural than for the political theorist concerned with directing the course of social change to abdicate in favor of the political scientist who merely describes it? If politics is scientific like meteorology, it is logical to expect it to describe or predict, but not to prescribe. We do not control the weather; nor should we expect to control the movements of political society. We accept them even though we make it a part of our curriculum to study them.

Behind this there may also lurk a less respectable reason. That is what might be called the politics of political studies—or the advantage

of research and of writing which does not raise controversial issues. In the past it has sometimes been safer for the academic worker to stick to description and pseudo science because this is favored by authority, and avoids the risk of clashing with "Foundations". "It seems probable that the activities of social scientists are increasingly being restricted by the power holders as the implications of social science become more apparent to the power holders and as social scientists become more dependent on funds for research."³ Certainly no academic discipline can hope, or justifiably claim, to play its proper part in society if it betrays the commitment to truth in order to gain material advantage. This is what the remark of Hans J. Morgenthau quoted below⁴ hints it is doing.

Yet there is certainly discernible an impatience with this "hyper-factualism" as well as with the view of politics as no more than an account of the operation of "necessary" laws of evolution. As John D. Millett wrote recently, "our fraternity of scholars generally repudiates the 'gloomy conclusion' that impersonal, nonrational forces 'beyond the control of men' govern social conduct. Instead, many insist that their purpose is to promote the goal of intelligent social action."⁵ We might say, perhaps, that there was a renewed tendency to take heed of the words of Hobbes that "science is the knowledge of consequences, and dependence of one fact upon another: by which out of what we can presently do, we know how to do something else when we will, or the like, another time."⁶ For those words suggest the cause and justification of political studies, the need to know how to act. Millett, indeed, puts forward "the proposition that from accumulated political thought and observation, political scientists have actually developed certain fundamental conceptions of government which stand above the stress and strain of current partisan strife. It is high time to make these conceptions articulate, to develop them in their full majesty, and to evaluate them by the test of experience."⁷ However that may be, "there is no progress for political scientists", he remarks, "in the sterility of an esoteric semantics."⁸

³ Arnold M. Rose, "Sociology and the Study of Values", *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. III, No. 1, p. 17.

⁴ See p. 12.

⁵ "Testament of Politics: An Exhortation to Political Scientists", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No. 4, December 1956, p. 525.

⁶ Leviathan, I, v. ⁷ Millett, *loc. cit.*, p. 525. ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 538.

III

A second reason, I would suggest, for the tendency to evade the responsibility for constructive political theory lies in what has been happening to philosophy. This is not so much the preoccupation with linguistic analysis. No one should quarrel with the clarification of words and concepts resulting from this, or with the greater caution in their employment which it encourages. In both respects its contribution is invaluable. It ought to lead, and there are signs that it is leading, to a more exact treatment of political theory and a more rigorous method.

But the so-called revolution in philosophy has of course gone much further than this. By concentrating on the imperfections of language, it has seemed to throw doubt on the very possibility of meaningful statement. (Did not Wittgenstein arrive at this result?) Under its impact principles used by political theorists appear—because they are tainted with the naturalistic fallacy—to be useless as guides. Concepts become tautologies. Generalizations are seen as so vague that anything can be read into them—or nothing. In fact much, if not all, of the work of political theorists from Plato to G. E. Moore is considered meaningless. Small wonder, then, if there is little encouragement to enter upon so discredited an activity.

Philosophy itself has so narrowed its field that it no longer claims to have anything to say of practical significance. If it analyzes the logic of thought, nothing is to result that can be expected to be helpful in the business of living. We cannot be helped by philosophy, or by a philosophically oriented political theory, for instance, to condemn (or approve) the torture of prisoners in a concentration camp. To do so is merely to give vent to a personal preference—or prejudice, as the late T. D. Weldon put it. Small wonder again, then, if entering upon the adventure of political theorizing is discouraged, for this is precisely the kind of question upon which it is expected to offer guidance.

An example of what I mean is a recent article on "The 'Consent' of the Governed" ⁹ in which the author starts out with the declared intention of showing that the notion of consent is a fiction. But then this notion of consent has been used, and I would say fruitfully used, in political theory, despite the treatment given to it by Hume, for about three centuries; and that being so one must be permitted to doubt

⁹C. W. Cassinelli, in *The Western Political Quarterly*, June 1959.

whether it can really be no more than purely fictitious. Now this article is interesting in several ways connected with my present argument. This is so first because by denying all meaning to the term—for to call it a fiction is surely to do this—it exemplifies the current philosophic influence in the direction of analyzing all significance out of a concept, thus discrediting it as a useful one and tending in effect to prohibit its employment. But, secondly, it is interesting for the reason that it adds to the treatment of the concept by such other writers as Lindsay, Lipson, MacIver, an analysis that serves the purpose of further clarification, in itself a valuable contribution. Thirdly, it leads to the conclusion that the term does in fact correspond to an important reality. Thus this article is not a pure illustration of the negative tendency to which I refer, nor of the sheer defeatism to which it leads; perhaps on the contrary it may indicate that we are already in a stage of transition away from this, and certainly other evidence could be brought to support such a view. Yet we cannot have it both ways: a notion cannot be a fiction and at the same time describe reality. We are not entitled to claim that a term is bereft of all meaning and usefulness, and then discover that it enshrines an important element of truth. What we are to do, however, is in a case like this to reinterpret such true concepts, rendering them more fertile and creative, more forward-looking and useful for our guidance. We have to undertake the business of reinterpretation in the light both of the different demands which changed conditions produce, and of the new body of knowledge as well as the developments of technique at our disposal for meeting them.

What I say here about the notion "consent of the governed" I have argued elsewhere ought to be said of other concepts and terms which have played a leading part in political theory—such as happiness, self-realization, freedom, education, property, the good life, and the nature of political obligation. They are, as it were, elements in the grammar of politics calling for new interpretation or changing emphasis, and for fresh analysis, in the light of varying social experience and knowledge. I cannot help thinking that it should be part of the business of philosophy to help in this adventure.

IV

There is, however, another reason for the eclipse of political theory. This lies, paradoxically enough, in what really amounts to the

greater need for it. If we consider what is the character of the dominant political philosophy of modern times in the Western world we must say, I think, that it is utilitarian and social-democratic. Yet at the very moment that it has come to fruition, as it were, in the welfare state and the affluent society it has had most doubt thrown upon some of its foundations. Now, doubt about the validity of a particular manifestation of political philosophy ought not to reflect upon the thing itself, but rather to bring about a rethinking. Yet it does seem as though the former consequence had followed. Can it be that the very universality of acceptance of the tenets of faith of one approach to social problems has rendered us no longer capable of reexamining them, for to defend what is taken for granted is to labor the obvious, and to suggest that reinterpretations are called for by a fuller experience is to fly in the face of cherished assumptions? Can it be that the success of one political theory has led to so complete an annihilation of alternatives that when deficiencies were revealed in it they could not seek their natural remedy?

Acceptance, of course, has been tacit rather than explicit. We may not all say in so many words that we believe in equalizing the opportunities to happiness, in aiming at the greatest happiness of the greatest number, or in identifying happiness for the individual with the greatest possible continuous flow of goods and services, and for society with a maximum gross per capita productivity. Yet these are surely the criteria invariably employed; and the fact that we do not specify them, but take them for granted, only means that they are so much a part of an accepted body of doctrine that they are not thought of as needing exposition or defense.

Political parties do not differ in their willingness to accept these criteria. Or at least none openly challenges them. They disagree of course in matters of method, emphasis or interpretation, and especially on the principle of equality, where their behavior when in power sometimes clearly belies the principle. But even here they will not be found nowadays attacking the theory, still less denying the objective to which its general acceptance requires them to pay lip service; they will take refuge in arguments about speed, cost, practicality. The ideal condition to which they look forward is really that of "the acquisitive society" which Tawney analyzed in the early 'twenties.

While this is true of parties of the Right, it seems to be in large measure true of parties of the Left also. For these have tended increas-

ingly to regard the equalizing of wealth not only as an end in itself but as the exclusive end. What precise combination they have adopted of socializing it, of taxing the rich, of raising wages, of providing free services, of ending poverty and insecurity does not matter. Whatever pattern their program of social justice or their new deal has taken, it has been concerned with utility and not with use.¹⁰

But the evils of an acquisitive society are not rendered less evil by being universalized, nor wrong scales of value less wrong by giving everyone that chance to adopt them. The remarkable success in the way of improving conditions which the new deals and social programs have achieved seems nevertheless to have produced a widespread sense of frustration. The affluent society shows signs of being emotionally and aesthetically impoverished, less a society than a lonely crowd of organization men and status-seekers, prone to seek escape from freedom and responsibility in conformity, acquiescence, or in being "other-directed". Its coming has served neither to reaffirm and endorse an old scale of human values nor to create a new and ardently held pattern of beliefs. Rather does it threaten the brave new world of a Huxley and an Orwell, of frustration and hatred, of inhumanity and violence.

I would not entirely exonerate political theory, or the lack of it, from blame for the growth of such social irresponsibility. At least I think it can do something by way of remedy if it looks afresh at the twin foundations of our dominating political doctrine. On the utilitarian side, I would suggest, it needs to take a fresh look at the process of free and empirical individual valuation which was so much a part of its original contribution and which, in denying the orthodox claims of conformity, placed responsibility where alone it can lie. On the side of social democracy it ought, I suggest, to look again at the old discredited concepts of

¹⁰ Since writing this I have come upon some remarks of the economist Alan Day which are highly illuminating, as well, I think, as confirmatory. He writes in *The Observer* of November 15, 1959: "It is absurd that in one of the richest countries in the world, where real income is rising progressively . . . there is a sense of poverty. . . . Much more important than the problems of the technical means of running the economic system . . . is the problem of how we shall use our rising incomes. It is much less important to argue whether we should double our standard of living in 20 years or in 35, than to consider the implications of a steadily rising standard of living. . . . How are we going to plan for this . . . without ruining the country for everyone by imposing an amorphaously squalid subtopia over half its area? These subtopian dangers, and our preoccupation with our poverty and economic crises, are both most apparent in our attitude to our social capital. . . ."

the good life and self-realization with the help, not only of Aristotle and Plato, but of the modern psychologist and political scientist with their examination of the warping and restricting effect of pressures upon the quality of social life, or of individual life. Then perhaps it might lead us to a society which spent less on advertising commercial products than upon education.

V

The need for political studies to work in this frame of reference is the greater for several recent developments. One is the tendency toward the identification of the modern state with one ideology or the other in the most intense social conflict of the time. This greatly reinforces the compulsions to conformity ordinarily in the hands of the group dominating state power. It supports them with the plea of patriotism and the demand for ensuring the security, and indeed the survival, of the social order itself in the face of the utter destruction threatened by the opposed ideology, identified with another state power. This reached its climax in the West in McCarthyism and in the operations of the Un-American Activities Committee, but has spread its poison much more widely. It is, of course, matched and surpassed in Russia. This "corruption of patriotism," as Hans J. Morgenthau has recently called it,¹¹ is a patent attack upon personality as well as upon the place of the individual in society, in fact upon the very values that make the society worth defending. Its effects on intellectual freedom and civic responsibility are insidious and far-reaching. They are not to be measured by the few who resist or suffer, who can be counted, but by the many who succumb and cannot.

While this particular development is new in form rather than in essence, for the claim of political authority to absorb the total personality of the individual is as old as history, its importance is much greater today because the whole mechanism for bringing compulsion to bear upon the mind is both more powerful and more concentrated. It is more powerful because the propagandist and the public relations man have a revolutionized body of knowledge available for their use. It is more concentrated inasmuch as the instruments of press and advertising, radio and television, through which they work, are monolithic in character and closely combined under the control of very few people.

¹¹ In *Dilemmas of Politics* (Chicago, 1958).

Here it is impossible to do more than suggest what are the effects of this kind of compulsion. Suffice it to give two quotations, one from an American, the other from a Russian, source. H. H. Wilson speaks of these as being the production as an "ideal type" of the man who is "dedicated to the avoidance of extreme views and believes it better to have no convictions that cannot be adjusted by consensus and compromise."¹² Pasternak, in an image that is recognizable beyond the confines of the Soviet Union, writes:

It was then that falsehood came into our Russian land. The great misfortune, the root of all the evil to come, was the loss of faith in the value of personal opinions. People imagined that it was out of date to follow their own moral sense, that they must all sing the same tune in chorus, and live by other people's notions, the notions which were being crammed down everybody's throat. And there arose the power of the glittering phrase.¹³

There can surely be no doubt about the growing importance of these pressures, or about the need this renders the more urgent for the political scientist to appraise their impact. He has not only to ask, that is to say, to what they are due and what forms they take. He has also to evaluate their effects. Such evaluation, indeed, can alone give meaning to his analysis. For to speak of political studies as having meaning is to say both that they present an ordered system of knowledge or empirically tested principles, or both, and that this is capable of offering guidance in the contemporary world. This is their proper task: to afford guidance. It is not merely to describe, regardless of all possible relevance. Nor is it to give a perfect one-and-only answer in a predicament where generally there is none. Nor even is it to predict. And the fact that this is the true nature of the political student's work shows why it needs to be, and to be seen to be, related to a coherent system of values. For it to be oriented as I suggest would help it to attain a coherence it lacks, and so to do what it is supposed to do. Failure to realize this is what is implied by Hans J. Morgenthau when he says that "it is the measure of

¹² *The Dilemma of the Obsolete Man* (Los Angeles, 1954); see also his *Congress: Corruption and Compromise* (New York, 1951). This theme is to be found in much other work, such as W. Sargant, *Battle for the Mind* (Garden City, 1957); Allen Wheelis, *The Quest for Identity* (New York, 1958); William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (New York, 1957); David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven, 1950); Erich Kahler, *The Tower and the Abyss* (New York, 1957) and *Man the Measure* (New York, 1956).

¹³ *Doctor Zhivago* (New York, 1958), p. 363.

the degree to which political science in America meets the needs of society rather than its moral commitment to the truth that it is not only eminently respectable and popular, but—what is worse—that it is also widely regarded with indifference.”¹⁴

The second development I have in mind which brings about this kind of pressure, and calls the political theorist to reassess our directives, is the result of the technological revolution. It is the loss of identity by the individual with the growth of the monolithic structure as the characteristic feature of economic, political and social life. In relation to it he feels insignificant. It is remote and incomprehensible; and he is confronted by it on all sides. It may be the corporation, private or public, that employs him and controls so much of his life and in which his security lies; the trade union that represents or instructs him, and with which, because of its growth in size, he is sometimes out of effective touch; the municipality or metropolis in which he lives; the political party with its millions of members; the government department, civic authority, or combine which supplies him with necessary services; or even the commercial corporation, shares in which constitute his property. All represent vast, impersonal, remote forces, often unaccountable, generally without any flow of responsibility either to him or from him. In little or no degree does he regard them as reflecting his personality. The less he finds himself able to influence them, the less does he think himself answerable for what they do, often in his name—answerable, that is, to himself, to society, to history. This means that there is a large area of his life, comprehending most of his relationships with the larger community, which has little or no meaning for him; it goes no way to meet his creative urge, his desire to give a purposive cohesion to his activities, his emotional need for fellowship; and yet it absorbs progressively more of these relationships. Compensation has to be sought in nonsocial or antisocial activities. As J. A. M. Meerloo writes:

If the complexity of a country's political and economic apparatus makes the individual citizen feel powerless, confused and useless, if he has no sense of participation in the forces that govern his daily life, or if he feels these forces to be so vast and confusing that he can no longer understand them, he will grasp at the totalitarian opportunity for belonging, for participation, for a simple formula that explains and rationalises what is beyond his comprehension.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Loc. cit.* ¹⁵ *Mental Seduction and Menticide* (London, 1957), p. 108.

Such frustration, alienation, schizophrenia are so plainly the antithesis of what I have called the twin foundations of our political doctrine with its concern for individual valuation and the good life that, if there is any truth in this diagnosis, this must clearly call for its reëxamination in the light of them.

Nor can there be any doubt that this diagnosis is at present being made widely and with an impressive unanimity. True, this is more characteristic of American than of English writing. That may be due to the development having gone further in America, to there being perhaps less resistance to it in the form of traditional or precapitalist codes of behavior, and less of a conviction that political institutions provide possible ways of escape. But there can be no doubt that the same phenomena exist in Britain too, or that there has been an increasing similarity in them during the last decade. True, too, that the diagnosis is to be seen more in the work of sociologists and psychologists than of political theorists. Perhaps they are nearer to the sources upon which a political theory appropriate to our group-, organization-, and complex-infested society must draw. For their whole tendency is to treat the individual not as the philosophic abstraction familiar to political theorists of the past, seen in contradistinction to another abstraction, the state; but as seeking his identity, his fulfillment, his freedom in a complex of social relationships some of which serve and others which hamper it. That political theory must have this kind of approach is surely the corollary. Essentially, that is to say, it is a projection of political pluralism.

The interest of the political scientist in pressure groups, élites, minorities, representative systems and the behavior of electors, parties and their organization, the press and the radio and public opinion is indeed an expression of just this impulse. If all these invite study because they are both clearly part of the process of government and also susceptible to more or less exact description—that is to “scientific” treatment—they have another characteristic in common. That is their relevance to the participation of the citizen in the democratic state. This is now seen to be manifold and complex in its forms, and channeled in devious ways. But the study of it is undertaken on the basis of assumptions in the realm of political theory, and, although these are generally tacit, to them must be attributed the view that the work is worth while. Orthodox democratic theory, starting from a monistic basis, held it manifest that maximum participation or the most active consent of all was the criterion of democracy. Moving off, as it were, from this postu-

late, these studies then show that in fact this participation resolves itself in practice into decision by pressure groups and minorities, indicating therefore that participation is unreal or nonexistent and democracy false. Robert A. Dahl's *Preface to Democratic Theory*,¹⁶ for instance, despite reference to consensus, seems to amount to this: it articulates this discovery into the argument that the main activity of participation consists in the appeasement of minorities.

It is impossible to escape the impression that these studies are conducted with a certain narrowness of perspective. They seem to lack the sense of orientation which political theory ought to give them. There is an apparent unawareness of any larger pattern in which they can be seen to cohere, and which can make them more creative and meaningful. This is because in a pluralist world we still live under the influence of a monistic politics. Our behavior as students of politics postulates a society essentially pluralist; our theory has been incompletely adapted to it. We should not be surprised by this; the history of political thought shows how slowly and hesitatingly the dead wood is cut away, how often our thinking is colored by ideas which, though discarded in logic, remain a habit in practice. Now, our past preoccupation with the state as the only form of association interesting us directly still colors our democratic theory. We have rejected it, for we now in fact regard it as "one association among many". It is surely the burden, for instance, of much of De Jouvenel's recent work that even in matters of power or of sovereignty the phenomena we examine are not manifest solely in the state and its ancillary organizations, but belong essentially anywhere that people come together to make decisions and act in combination. Such widening of our perspective should not lead to the abandonment of democratic theory. Rather ought the result to be a fresh look at its foundations. The criteria emerging from this are then seen to have no exclusive relevance to that particular association we know as the state. The frame of reference that I have suggested they provide¹⁷ has a much more general application. If it gives greater coherence and orientation to our activities in political studies, it may also help that discipline to offer some guidance on the processes of valuation needed among the pressures and impulsions to conformity with which the world that results from the technological revolution confronts us.

¹⁶ Chicago, 1956.

¹⁷ Very generally above, more specifically in my *Foundations of Political Theory* (London and Fair Lawn, N.J., 1958).

VI

Finally, an orientation of political theory, or a frame of reference for it, of the kind here implied is suited to our needs. For the good life, self-realization, happiness—vague and difficult to give precision to though they be—do have meaning. They summarize what, as practical people living in the everyday world of our own experience, we seek in order to give direction to our lives; and what we do there we should do as political theorists. Indeed, we look for aid to psychology and ethics and any other branch of study which may contribute to this eclectic “master-science” to help in their analysis.

What is the kind of help they can give in fact today? A few lines cannot do justice to this and so may risk weakening the case. But at least it may be said that they suggest the absence of any single, ideal stereotype pattern of belief and behavior, but point rather to great diversity. They indicate valuation as an individual, rational or intelligent, and empirical process, needing to produce active belief rather than passive acquiescence if it is to be creative and fulfilling; pleasure as having no exact correlation with what the economist calls consumption, with market-value “utility” but rather with the use that is made of goods and services; happiness as being as closely related to how we live as to having the materials with which to live, as involving the satisfaction of needs for fellowship, for making activity meaningful or creative, for responsible “participation.” If they thus reinforce the basic tenets of social democracy, they serve to extend their relevance from the increasingly remote “political” area, in its orthodox definition of exclusive concern with the legal mechanisms of the state, to that occupied by all the forms of interlocking collectivities which characterize the life of modern societies.

22



